DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 401 396 CE 072 882

AUTHOR	Boice, Mike; And Others
TITLE	Out of Sight, Out of Mind? Barriers to Participation in Rural Adult Education.
INSTITUTION	Sussex Univ. (England). Centre for Continuing Education.
REPORT NO	ISBN-0-904242-37-4
PUB DATE	94
NOTE	211p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Centre for Continuing Education, Education Development Bldg., University of Sussex, Falmer, Brighton BN1 9RG, England, United Kingdom (10 British pounds).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research/Technical (143)
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*Access to Education; *Adult Education; Case Studies; Differences; *Economic Factors; *Educational Opportunities; Educational Trends; Foreign Countries; National Surveys; *Politics of Education; Regional Characteristics; *Rural Education; Social Problems; Womens Education
IDENTIFIERS	*England

ABSTRACT

This document contains the following papers, which were developed during a project in which barriers to participation in adult education in rural England were examined through case studies of the historical/geographical, economic/social, and political/public/administrative barriers to participation in four regions of England (East Sussex, Derbyshire, Cornwall, and North Yorkshire): "Introduction" (John Lowerson); "Case Study 1: East Sussex" (John Payne); "Case Study 2: Derbyshire" (John Payne); "Case Study 3: Cornwall" (John Payne); "Case Study 4: North Yorkshire" (Mike Boice); "Adult Education and Changing Roles of Women in Rural Communities" (Susan McGrath); and "Reflections" (John Lowerson). Among the various barriers identified in the papers are the following: the comparative expense of developing programs for small, relatively scattered potential cohorts; physical isolation compounded by transportation difficulties; the delicacy of local rural economics, patterns of material and cultural deprivation; limited opportunities for retraining and general learning in rural areas; national policymakers' unawareness of many rural problems; lack of cohesive policies at the national and local levels; and threats to already-sparse staffing in rural areas because of resource cutbacks. (MN)

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ED 401 396

Out of Sight, Out of Mind? Barriers to Participation in Rural Adult Education

Mike Boice
Susan McGrath
John Payne
John Lowerson

Edited by John Lowerson and Alistair Thomson

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Barriers to Participation
in
Rural Adult Education

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Addendum

During the research for the Derbyshire Case Study, (page 53), no contact was made with High Peak College. We have subsequently learnt that the college organises Kitemarked Access courses and related rural adult education provision. Further information is available from the Adult and Continuing Education Unit at High Peak College.

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Summary of Findings: Barriers to Participation in Rural Adult Education

1. Historical and Geographical

There are barriers to adult education which are inherent and endemic to the countryside and which show little regional variation:

a. relatively scattered potential cohorts are likely to form small and comparatively expensive groups;

b. physical isolation is exacerbated by transport difficulties, public and private, affecting women in particular;

c. powerful cultural factors may inhibit take-up rates.

2. Economic and Social

a. Local rural economies, whilst very varied, are all particularly delicate. The major shift from dependence on primary to tertiary forms represents some diversification and opportunity for new employment but it is only partially complete.

b. Considerable levels of low 'family wages' and restricted employment opportunities bear particularly hard on married women and single-parent families. For them part-time employment is still dominant. The relatively high total costs of education participation inhibit particularly where the capacity for marginal expenditure is low.

c. Patterns of material and cultural deprivation, although broadly similar to urban ones, have an added poignancy in view of cultural expectations of the rural and act as major deterrents.

d. Opportunities for retraining and general learning are restricted. There are considerable regional variations in opportunities for progression. None is adequate.

e. There is a considerable tension in many areas between the requirements of 'incomer' groups and the indigenous population. It is usually the latter which is less well served by existing provision.

3. Political, Public and Administrative

a. Recent changes in both national and public policies, a degree of devolution accompanied paradoxically by growing centralisation which reduces local initiative, are adding further levels of deterrent to both provision and recruitment.

b. Many rural problems are practically 'invisible' to national policymakers and this exacerbates a long history of under-provision.

c. Many institutions which have assumed responsibility for provision are less committed to resourcing it or more openly competitive than their predecessors. In many instances those who are committed are seriously under-resourced.

d. The personal commitment of those who work in the field remains high but already sparse staffing is threatened by resource cutbacks.

e. There is considerable scope for innovation but this is piecemeal and inadequately-resourced. Cohesion is lacking at both national and local levels and is being made worse by current decentralising policies.

f. This is making further fragmentation likely. There is little chance of building further on experimental and pump-priming bases.

g. The need for constant fund-raising for small projects from multiple sources damages morale and inhibits long-term planning.

h. To bring rural provision to an acceptable standard will require adequately-prepared staff with time-scales and resource levels which are sufficient to encourage systematic and well-rooted development.

i. Whilst there is considerable potential for partnership between 'formal' and 'voluntary' providers this should not be encouraged solely as a low-cost alternative.

4. Overall

We were impressed by the vitality of much of the work being done and the morale of staff despite many recent vicissitudes. In many areas there is a high level of inter-institutional provision and good formal-voluntary collaboration. But there many major gaps and responsiveness is inhibited considerably by present policies and their short-term emphasis.

5. Future Research

There is a pressing need for a more comprehensive but short-term examination of the role of voluntary provision and of comparability in a European context. One major issue for investigation would be a survey of actual and potential students as well as of non-participants in rural areas. It would be particularly important to establish the relationship between economic and social factors in inhibiting responsiveness when linked with cultural ones and the problems of a 'rural mindset'.

Introduction

John Lowerson

In the final throes of its work, before the Higher Education Funding Council/England assumed responsibility for a much wider constituency, the Universities' Funding Council dispensed a number of research grants to Continuing Education Departments. At the University of Sussex we had submitted a bid to investigate barriers to participation in rural adult education and this was successful in 1993.

We were prompted to do this by a growing awareness of problems in the region for which we have been the 'responsible body' (in older administrative language). Although the two counties of East and West Sussex contain large conurbations - the built-up coastal strip and the Burgess Hill-Gatwick corridor - they are still identified popularly as predominantly rural, an often picturesque world of small-scale communities. We were concerned at an imbalance in our provision which was more than just determined by the numerical concentration of population and by the risks of having to withdraw from the non-urban peripheries in response to changing funding/cost requirements. This was paralleled in discussions with colleagues elsewhere and it became clear to us that there was a growing sense of crisis on a national scale.

All adult education is a challenging activity for both providers and students but much of recent thinking and practice has concentrated heavily on urban needs, ethnic minority and gender issues and the deprivations of a town-based 'underclass'. At no time have we questioned the validity of that but we have been concerned by the virtual invisibility of a rural dimension in which both gender and deprivation are pressing issues. It was that which focused our attention on 'barriers' in the broadest possible sense; imposed, operational and internalised.

The funding that was made available was for an academic year so that limited the scope of our exercise. Although it will stand as a discrete piece of research, as the work progressed we realised that there were major issues which we could only address in part and that we would hope to extend the project by seeking other funding. That is now in process.

The Team and its Methods

The original idea was to employ a full-time single worker responsible to an academic director. In fact, the funding available was not quite sufficient and we decided on another approach. A co-ordinating group would decide on the areas for investigation and one or more contract workers would be employed on a piecework basis to do the fieldwork and write up each area. These would then be amalgamated into a single report by the director of the project, myself, Reader in History in the Centre for Continuing Education. In the event, personal circumstances produced a much more fluid and creative situation. From an initial strong field we appointed Dr. John Payne, an experienced adult educator and researcher, who carried out the first three regional studies. A new post prevented his preparing the fourth and we were fortunate in procuring the services of Mike

Boice, recently 'early retired' as an adviser to East Sussex County Council. In addition, we drafted an Educational Guidance Worker with a background in rural outreach in East Sussex, Susan McGrath, as an outside adviser; she eventually undertook to write a reflective piece on gender issues.

This became a collaborative group, augmented by Dr. Al Thomson, CCE's co-ordinator of research, and by Dr. Fred Gray, CCE's Director. We were helped also by Erica Towner and by Mary Hoar who, as ever, did considerable support work.

The academics immediately involved in the project as director and field workers have over a century of experience in the field between them (cumulatively, not chronologically). Between us, we have worked in statutory, voluntary and tertiary aspects of adult education. We have considerable variety and overlap, but also very different personal emphases, which made for a lively approach.

Although we wanted to begin with part of the University's area of responsibility, East Sussex, we also wanted some comparisons which would illustrate the regional variety and complexity of the issues now being faced in England. We looked for variety in geographical distribution and rural 'type', within the very tight constraints of cost and time-related feasibility. East Sussex is 'metropolitan' and south-eastern. One other factor that influenced our choice was the nature of existing networks of contacts to speed up the investigative process. In the event we fixed on Cornwall, representing the far west, Derbyshire for the north Midlands and North Yorkshire for the North. With another year, to be fully comprehensive, we would have wished to have included the East and the borders with Scotland. Wales, we felt, had cultural differences which our limited time-scale would not really have allowed us to penetrate. In the event, our choice provided an interesting range of comparison and contrast in general economic and social patterns as well as in current provision.

Each field study begins with an overall review of the particular local circumstances, then goes on to look at general adult education provision before undertaking one or more micro-studies. We relied very much in this on the use of local 'key respondents', who provided both data and introductions. In turn, they were invited to comment on each report in draft and their criticisms have been incorporated into the final products. Many of these came to us through existing networks and fed us further along the line. We cannot express too much our gratitude for their time and help. They are named in the relevant area study.

Although there were broad lines of agreement as to what should be asked, we were very conscious of the value of a dynamic methodology rather than using a scheme fixed *ab initio*. So our reports overlap but they are also different because new elements were incorporated as the year progressed. Ideally, we would recast the earlier ones but that is not possible. Similarly, each report bears some marks of the idiosyncrasies of its writer. We feel that that is actually important in a living work of this type. We are aware of our prejudices and differences but have tried to avoid the obsessive navel-watching that much present post-modernist work in adult education has become lost in. Instead, we have stayed firmly in the tradition of ethnographic case studies. My *Reflections* attempt to widen the context by locating the field studies in some of the current debates about 'rurality'.

Research Limitations

There is a conceptual problem with 'rural' which I explore later and we largely used local operating definitions rather than construct over-taut models which would inhibit some work. (Short 1992) As a parallel example - some years ago, a significant enquiry into Victorian rural religion chose an area but deliberately excluded the largest settlement on the ground that it was 'urban'; it was actually the market and cultural centre of the hinterland (Obelkevich 1976). We have tried to avoid such a problem by recognising the role of quite large settlements within our selected areas.

There were time/cost limits on our information-gathering. On the whole this has meant a far greater reliance on the provider side and on formal mechanisms that we would have wished.

We were virtually unable, because of this, to spend much time with the vast network of overlapping informal and voluntary bodies, churches and what have you, that are so important in rural areas. The later reports give some hint of their role. A team directed by Konrad Elsdon at Nottingham is working through some of these bodies and its publications so far have informed our thinking. Their direction of approach is, however, rather different from ours; it has not yet moved from compilation and description to overall reflection and analysis (Elsdon 1991, 1992, 1993).

The biggest problem, yet to be cracked by any researchers significantly, is that of the barriers raised by the intended beneficiaries of so much provision. 'What holds them back?', is a key issue. We had not the resources to do more than hint at this problem but it remains surely central to any future research agenda. Identifying 'needs' is one thing, encouraging participation is another.

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Case Study 1

East Sussex

John Payne

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1. Introduction: Characteristics of East Sussex

East Sussex can be categorised as a "metropolitan" rural area, in that it is relatively close to London and has a significant population of commuters and retired people. The most important towns are the coastal settlements of Brighton, Hastings and Eastbourne. These have a variety of manufacturing and service industries, including tourism and the two universities of Brighton and Sussex.

The western part of the county is served by trains from London (Victoria) to Brighton, Lewes, Eastbourne and Hastings; the eastern part of the county is served by the London (Charing Cross) to Hastings line, which also passes through Wadhurst, Battle and Robertsbridge. The interior area of the county - the Sussex Weald - is served by a single branch line through Crowborough to Uckfield, the future of which is uncertain. Indeed, public transport is a controversial issue in East Sussex. The fourth line railway line into East Sussex, via Ashford to Hastings, has been made single track between Hastings and Rye. Yet there is a strong case to be made for development of the railway infrastructure to relieve local congestion and heavy goods traffic (including aggregates and hazardous chemicals) on the roads.

The problems of the area are not those traditionally associated with declining rural areas in Western Europe - depopulation and the flight from the land. Population figures have risen steadily from 374,000 in 1891 to 683,400 in 1991. Indeed, 1991 census figures show an increase of between 5.6% and 6.8% in Eastbourne, Hastings and the rural district of Rother around Rye, and between 9.8% and 10.5% in the semi-rural districts of Lewes and Wealden (map 1). These increases were almost entirely due to inward migration. Only Brighton shows a decline in population, a characteristic shared with other large city areas in the UK. Retirement is a major demographic feature in East Sussex: 26.4% of the population was of pensionable age, and 33.5% of households consisted only of pensioners. However, it is also important to note that these figures had decreased by 2% and 3% respectively since 1981. Further, pensioners are not evenly distributed: Rother had 34.1% pensioners, while Brighton had only 21.8%; Hastings had 19.6% population of under 16s. An examination of census returns by parish would almost certainly reveal considerable differences within districts as well as between them. Thus it is important to note at the beginning of this report that we are dealing with a heterogeneous area.

Overall demographic trends in East Sussex are compatible with those in the other case-study counties (Cornwall, Derbyshire, North Yorkshire). As can be seen from map 2, East Sussex and North Yorks are both within the 5-10% increase range for 1991-2001 population projections. Derbyshire is between 0-5% and Cornwall in the 10% plus group. Of major significance is the projection that the retirement population will begin to fall back towards the national average in both East Sussex and Cornwall (table 1). It may be that in the context of declining public services, a retirement home in a rural area far from friends and relations is no longer an attractive proposition. The increase in the working population raises important questions about rural economic development and associated education and training needs.

Most people have idealised images of rural counties, sometimes based on holiday visits, sometimes on postcards sent by friends, pictures in calendars, programmes on television or radio (North Yorkshire has been an especially popular TV location). Between drafts of this case-study, I visited Derbyshire in connection with the second case-study in this series. On the same day that the Ashbourne-Buxton road was closed by snow, emphasising the physical

isolation of many parts of that county, I saw a film-crew generating artificial snow in Wirksworth during filming of an episode of the TV programme "Peak Practice", another of these rather sentimental views of "traditional" rural life. This rural idyll can be contrasted with what the Women's Returners Network have described as:

> *the special problems faced by women in the countryside, in terms of low pay, isolation and lack of access to transport or childcare, as well as the different kind (sic) of opportunities and new kinds of employment on offer.* (Meade-King, n/d)

This publication chose for one of its examples of rural women returners a student on a Hastings College course run at Rye, in the East Sussex Rural Development Area. One example of the risks of stereotyping is that employment patterns in East Sussex show significant and disturbing trends, so that in terms of both unemployment and low pay, East Sussex compares very badly with much of the rest of the country. Men in employment of all kinds (including government training schemes) fell by 3 percentage points between the 1981 and 1991 censuses, while women in employment rose by 6.5 percentage points. The tertiarisation of the economy is accompanied by a feminisation of the labour force: many of the jobs in the new service industries (e.g. tourism, leisure, retail, finance) are "women's jobs", often part-time and low paid.

Unemployment in 1991 was estimated to be 9.2% (8.4%) for men and 4.1% (3.7%) for women. However, a number of important points need to be made here:

1. Unemployment has continued to rise since 1991.

2. The census figure gives unemployment as a percentage of the whole population rather than as a percentage of the economically active.

3. There are major variations between and within districts.

4. The many changes in the way official UK unemployment statistics are calculated have served to exclude many unemployed women from the register and to mask the extent of female unemployment.

The implications of these points are:

1. and 2. Unemployment level. At September 1993, the overall unemployment rate for the county stood at 12.1% of the economically active population. This placed East Sussex 7th of 67 in order of counties with the highest unemployment rates. For the year ending September 1993, the percentage change was +7%, compared with +5% in the South-East and +2% nationally.

3. September 1993 figures varied between 5.8% (297th out of 322) in the Crawley Travel to Work Area (TTWA) in the north-western part of the county, to 13.0% (32nd of 322) in the Brighton TTWA and a staggering 13.7% in Hastings TTWA (23rd of 322). In the two most rural districts, unemployment stood at 6.3% in Wealden and 10.2% in Rother. However, this is still not the whole story. Analysing the figures by ward, unemployment in Hailsham in Wealden stood at 9.0% or 568 people. In Rother, Rye ward was 11.6% (210 people), Winchelsea / Winchelsea Beach / Rye Harbour 13.7% (86 people), and 16.4% in Iden / Rye Foreign / Playden / E. Guideford / Camber (165 people). Further disaggregation at parish level would confirm the view of a number of informants that unemployment in some parishes around

Rye is over 20%, in an area which has few of the facilities (however inadequate) for responding to unemployment that are found in urban centres. This point will be taken up again later in the report.

In addition to the problem of unemployment, there is a major problem in relation to pay levels, deriving in part from the point made above about the tertiarisation / feminisation of the labour force, but also the seasonal, part-time and low-paid nature of much of the work in tourism, retailing, office-work and (to a lesser extent) agriculture. Even for full-time workers, East Sussex lags way behind the rest of the country in general and the "affluent" South East region in particular. Thus 1988 figures for East Sussex show average male earnings at £224.30 (£245.80 in GB. and £283.00 in the SE.); female earnings were £162.90 (£164.20 and £188.10). 14.6% of men and 19.7% of women were earning less than £130 per week (ESCC/REPLAN 1989:para 6). A number of recent studies (e.g. by J. Packman in Norfolk, in McGivney 1990:115) have calculated that 25% of rural households live at or below the poverty line.

Participation in adult education

Given the extent of unemployment and poverty in East Sussex outlined in the previous section, and given the rather better known phenomenon of wealthy commuter and retirement communities in East Sussex, an initial distinction can be made between two broad groups whose spatial distribution may vary from one locality to another:

1. A relatively wealthy, relatively well educated community for whom adult education activities are a desirable but not essential feature of their lives.

2. A relatively poor, relatively poorly educated community who are unmotivated towards adult education, yet whose lives could be transformed materially and culturally by participation. Even when the socially constructed barriers to participation come down, there are still formidable practical problems to be overcome, most of them spatially determined.

It is useful at this point to briefly rehearse the barriers to rural participation in adult learning most frequently mentioned in the literature (McGivney 1990), since they provide a template against which the various initiatives documented in this report can be evaluated.

1. Poverty is a significant barrier. It is not just a question of fees, though these are extremely high. It is also a question of costs for transport to and from courses, possible childcare costs, costs of books and/or other essential materials.

2. Transport. The problems of rural transport are well known. Problems arise when:

   (i) the household has a car but it is used during the daytime for one partner (usually the man) for work.

   (ii) the members of the household are dependent on public transport which can be extremely infrequent or even non-existent. Even on

relatively well serviced routes, there are seldom buses in the evening which could be used to attend evening classes.

3. Further problems arise from the location of educational services. Colleges of Further and Higher Education in East Sussex are concentrated along the coast (map 3). Inland areas are served by a network of Community Colleges, some of them long-standing, others of much more recent establishment. Only a very limited range of activities is put on in villages.

4. Childcare is hard to find in rural areas. Voluntary playgroups provide contexts in which rural women meet, but are not always long enough to enable women to travel to a course while the child remains in the playgroup. Rural child-minders are few and far between. Without a car, it may be impossible to access what limited childcare is available. Adult education provision with linked childcare is still the exception rather than the rule in East Sussex.

Beyond these material constraints, there is a real sense of isolation between people in rural areas. The image of the tight-knit village community may simply not be recognised by unemployed rural men or by rural women stuck at home with small children or by elderly people living on state pensions and dependent on ever-decreasing public services. As Cathles and Fazaeli have commented:

> *This experience can limit women's expectations and ambitions. There is often no contact with or exposure to different groups and communities, to varied work opportunities or to experience of new skills or ideas. In many villages most people who work leave every day to work elsewhere and for those left at home, life revolves around one very small and insular community. It can be a difficult and sometimes dramatic change for many to take part in group activities in a new environment.* (Cathles and Fazaeli 1993:108)

This case-study , then, is not just concerned with material constraints on rural people's access to learning opportunities, but on the way these constraints are subjectively experienced as a sense of inability to change the conditions of one's own life. Thus before questions of access and participation can be addressed, there have to be processes whereby these limitations on the self and its potential can be challenged. McGivney has argued on the basis of both literature review and field-work that:

> *the most powerful barrier to access is attitudes and expectations. Education is simply not part of the value system and behaviour pattern of a disturbing number of people. To change this requires a fundamental shift in societal values and moves towards a perception of education as an enabling service for the whole community, rather than just for a small, academically-oriented elite.* (McGivney 1990:4)

2. Methodology

Every case-study is limited by practical issues of available resources, time-scale and access to information. In this present study, access has been freely granted to a wide range of information. However, given the other limitations (money and time-scale) it has not necessarily been possible to give due justice to the range of material put at the researcher's disposal. This in turn suggests that the case-study should be seen as a provisional statement to be modified at some point in the future by further work. I am particularly conscious of the strength of criticisms made by Bernadette Murphy of the state of rural adult education research:

> *Financially and methodologically impoverished, action-oriented (sic) and descriptive, it has not shown in any coherent and comprehensively documented way, what adult education is or might become. It has done little to further the terms of a theoretical and methodological debate within adult education practice or an educational policy debate outside of it. Statements (articles of faith almost) about the value of adult education in rural areas are often indistinguishable from those made in urban contexts* ... (Murphy 1992:121)

She argues that the "pragmatic approach exemplified in *Country Learning*[1] has improved the quality of many adult education activities (and communicative and collaborative practices between them) while narrowing the focus of adult education research in rural areas" (*idem*). I am conscious that the present research project may, in that sense, be more part of the problem than the solution to adult education research in rural areas! While I have tried to stick closely to the realities of rural life (demography, employment, transport, local government, social conflict), the case-study format necessarily demands a relatively factual account of provision. I have indicated lines for analysis where possible, but it remains to be seen how and when the threads of such an analysis will be tied together in a sociological account of the intervention that adult education constitutes, or might constitute in the future, in the social life of rural England. It also seems unlikely that a research project on this limited scale can adequately assess the subjective experience of rural isolation and poverty.

Evidence for this first case-study of East Sussex has been collected in three main categories:

> **Primary sources.** These include 1991 census data, and information from East Sussex County Council on unemployment in the county, as well as a range of educational prospectuses from colleges, the LEA sector, CCE and the WEA. I have also consulted local papers, newsletters and parish magazines.
>
> **Secondary sources.** These include written reports of previous research and development work in East Sussex. In particular, I have had access to a large amount of material stemming from the 1987-89 East Sussex County Council / REPLAN project.

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[1] NIACE/REPLAN, *Country learning. A development workers' guide to supporting unwaged rural learners*, Leicester, NIACE, 1989

Interviews with key respondents.

Interviews have been conducted with:

Jill Harris, Adult Basic Education Co-ordinator (now Adult Education Development Officer) East Sussex County Council
Trevor Cherriett and Penny Shimmins, Sussex Rural Community Council, Lewes
Susan McGrath and Gina Sanderson, Hastings College of Arts and Technology
Joy Mercer, Lewes Tertiary College
Chris Stinton, Uplands Community College, Wadhurst
Dick Partridge, Beacon Community College, Crowborough
David Alfred, WEA
Martin Ryle, CCE
Polly Bradford, part-time tutor, Uplands C.C.

I would like to thank all of them for the interest they have shown in this project.

In addition, the researcher attended a meeting of the Rye and Winchelsea Network.

Feedback from key respondents

Colleagues in East Sussex have spent some effort in updating me on developments since I completed the report at the end of 1993. In particular, I acknowledge the strength of points made by Sue Humphreys (Hastings College) who has pointed out that the report ignores the wealth of adult learning going on outside of the statutory sector. In East Sussex this includes: P.P.A., Youth Service, W.I., independent village classes, village produce associations, local history organisations and church groups. My colleague Mike Boice has made good some of these silences and omissions in his case study of North Yorkshire. Clearly, any adequate conceptualisation of "community education" must include both statutory and voluntary effort, and the many overlaps between the two.

3. LEA Community Education in East Sussex

LEA Community Education in East Sussex is provided through the network of 11 Community Colleges, the 4 FE Colleges (now of course independent corporations but still providing some non-schedule 2 work for the LEA) and the Friends Centre in Brighton. For the purpose of this study, with its rural emphasis, Eastbourne and Brighton Colleges, Portslade Community College and the Friends Centre have been ignored, as serving predominantly urban areas. Hastings and Lewes Colleges are considered in section 4.3.

Until recently there were County adult education advisers for both Youth Service and Adult Education work, and the loss of these posts was keenly felt by a number of the people I spoke to in Community Colleges. It was felt that training, co-ordination between colleges and the professional ethos of the service would all suffer. It was noted that the new situation would mitigate against the efficient provision of county-wide services such as educational guidance. It was also not clear how quality control would be exercised in relation to the LEA work contracted to the colleges, or the Schedule 2 work contracted to the Community Colleges.[2] Responsibility for the Community Education service now lies with a small team at County Hall in Lewes. There is one permanent post allocated to Adult Education - the Adult Education Development Officer (this post is held by the person who was previously County Basic Skills Co-ordinator). An internal document describes the function of this central team in the following terms:

> *The central team is responsible for allocating resources as fairly as possible, within the framework provided by the county policy for community education, and according to the terms of the agreements between the County Council and the providers of the service.*
>
> *This requires acknowledging the differing needs of urban and rural areas, respecting the voluntary participation of service users, and monitoring the quality of the service provided against agreed performance indicators. A high quality of service, providing value for money and progressive personal development for participants will be the chief goals of the provision, with the co-ordination provided by the central team.* (East Sussex County Council, internal document, 1993)

Community Colleges

These are basically secondary schools with attached Youth and Adult Education provision, typically serving small towns (e.g. Crowborough) or large villages (e.g. Wadhurst). For ease of reading, I have generally used the name of the town/village rather than the college name which is often different (e.g. Claverham C.C. in Battle). They are generally in modern buildings located on the outskirts of the town/village. Three tranches of Community Colleges can be identified:

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[2] These issues, which stem largely from implementation of the 1992 FHE Act, have not been dealt with in great detail in this case-study. I am aware that the ex-Adult Education adviser for Sussex, Mike Boice is currently writing an MA thesis on this subject, and I would hope that his work, when it becomes available, will supplement the current report.

1. Colleges set up in the 1970s: Portslade, Claverham, Wadhurst
2. Colleges set up in 1987: Heathfield, Uckfield, Crowborough, Ringmer
3. Colleges set up April 1992: Rye, Robertsbridge, Hailsham, Seaford.

There is no single management structure (see Table 2). In those established as Community Colleges from the start there is a single manager for Youth and Adult provision, plus a member of staff responsible for delivery of Adult Education. In others where the community role has been tacked on to an existing school, the Community Tutor is directly responsible for the Adult Education programme. S/he may have school teaching responsibilities as well, and line management is usually to a College Vice-Principal (or Deputy Head). Where there is a CE manager, there is a sub-committee of the Governing Body with equal status with other sub-committees. In other cases, the role of such a committee is largely advisory.

The core Adult Education provision of these Community Colleges will be familiar to anyone who has followed the developing argument about the LEA adult education curriculum over recent years. Adult Education operates on a professional ethos of "responsiveness to need". Yet all too often, it is the professional who defines the needs, and the curriculum changes little from one part of the country to the other, irrespective of rural or urban setting. The limited resources available to what has always been the Cinderella of the education service has not helped: considerable resources, especially of paid workers, are needed to facilitate people in defining for themselves what their needs and desires are. It is a slow process, not least because motivation to participate in adult learning grows and changes over time. This point will be explored further in the Derbyshire case-study.

The extent to which provision is standardised is illustrated by the circular letter from the new Robertsbridge Community College (included as Appendix 1) which asks respondents "What type of course do you feel would be most useful to you?". The range of courses are very similar to those of existing Community Colleges. Adult Education in East Sussex provides Arts and Crafts courses, languages, a range of Keep Fit, Physical Education and Health Education options, a range of Business Studies courses, and some academic (GCSE and "A" level) classes. That is to say they cater for the leisure interests of those already in work (and their dependants) or retired from work, a range of professional updating courses for those in work, limited by the availability of specialist facilities, and some limited opportunities for people to restart initial education felt to be incomplete. What is not provided are open-ended opportunities for adults to explore the ways in which education could transform the lives of those who have benefited least from initial education and training.

Given the financial management of Adult Education in East Sussex, it would be surprising if it were otherwise. With some exceptions that will be dealt with later, the LEA provides only the premises and equipment and the staff time of the organiser. The cost of part-time tutors, secretarial staff and materials are met by the fee income from students themselves. While local managers fix fees and concessions, this determines a fee averaging £1.60 per hour across the county, equivalent to £32 for a 10 week, 2-hours a week class. Some concessions, of between 10% and 40%, are available to those on benefit, but these must be accounted for within the overall costs met by fee income. Thus it is not possible for more than a small minority of students to be paying a concessionary fee. In practical terms, this leads staff into difficult situations not usually covered by professional training courses, but which will be only too familiar to people with day-to-day contact with Adult Education: part-time staff paid 1 and a half hours for teaching a 2-hour staff, "private classes" on the premises and smaller classes for which students pay extra fees. Thus much of the professional adult educator time is spent not

assessing and meeting community needs but in complicated juggling acts to balance the books. It is a profoundly unsatisfactory position. Even if one accepts that the adult education curriculum should be dominated by leisure activities, there is no reason why the same equal opportunities issues about who participates and why should not be confronted as in any other form of adult education provision (Payne 1991). At the same time, I am aware that these criticisms come from a view of public service which is quite different from the prevailing market ideology which determines the practice of publicly funded agencies at the present time.

When the curriculum at the different Community Colleges is compared (figure 1), it is clear that within the "core curriculum" there are clear variations from one centre to another. When this information was circulated to the staff for their comment, responses mentioned the availability of good tutors, the success (or otherwise) of marketing strategies, and the availability of resources as factors influencing the core offer. There are also however some local features which would merit further exploration, such as the high proportion of Health courses at Wadhurst which consist of alternative medicine and therapies. I visited the local wholefood shop and found an extraordinary number of cards on a notice-board advertising "alternative" services of one kind or another. Clearly this is a particular feature of life in the Wadhurst area which is reflected in the adult education programme. I have argued elsewhere, in relation to a study of an Adult Education Centre in Inner London, that adult education provides a space where such alternative middle-class cultural interests may be pursued (Payne 1992).

In addition to this core provision, there are a number of other significant features of Community College provision, as indicated in table 2. These are referred to briefly below.

Issues in Community Education

The percentage figures in Table 2 refer to the conventional adult educational curriculum. However, there are various other aspects of the work of Community Colleges which should be noted:

Adult Basic Education

Skills at Work

Village classes

These are largely dealt with in section 5, the microstudy of the Crowborough/Wadhurst area. It is unlikely that the issues raised in that section will be different from those in other Community Colleges, though emphases will no doubt vary.

Table 2: Community colleges in East Sussex

CE in East Sussex	Wadhurst	Uckfield	Ringmer	Heathfield	Hailsham	Battle	Crow-borough	Seaford
Arts & Crafts	36	32	25	35	42	36	24	33
Languages	12	15	13	18	10	11	17	14
Health	12	25	43	23	13	17	33	19
Academic	14	6	0	6	5	5	4	4
Business	11	13	5	9	19	8	7	16
Access	1	0	0	1	0	0	3	0
Science & Tech	3	0	8	5	3	5	3	4
Misc.	12	9	8	4	8	15	9	13
% total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total classes	133	108	40	80	77	110	108	110
ABE	3 gps	Yes	No	1 gp	4 gps	2 gps	Yes	3 gps
Skills at work	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Village classes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Open Learning	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Saturday classes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Staffing	Comm ad't tut.	C.A.T. ABE org.	Comm tut.	C.A.T.	CE co -ord ACE org.	Comm tut.	CE mgr. AE org.	Post-16 mgr.
Facilities for groups	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Adults in 6th form	Yes	No	No	Yes (+Yr 4/5)	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
CCE courses	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
WEA courses	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
car share	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes

Notes to table 1:

1. Total numbers of courses may not be recognised by organisers, because I have not counted one-off (e.g. Saturday) courses, or courses referred to in the lower boxes (e.g. WEA or CCE courses). Where a short course is repeated, this is usually counted only once.

2. The interpretation of some headings is variable. For example, car-sharing schemes may simply happen, or be encouraged to varying extents by staff.

Open Learning

This is referred to in the discussion of Wadhurst in section 5. As open learning has developed in the UK, it has become obvious that those with the greatest educational needs are least well served by Open Learning, unless it is well supported. The learner needs a supportive network, accessible either face-to-face or by phone to support her through her studies. Open Learning is likely to make a difference in rural areas only if it is linked to the development of networks such as the Wiltshire and Northamptonshire Women Returners networks, supported in turn by the national Women Returners Network. A distance teaching package for Information Technology has been used in both networks linked to New Opportunities for Women courses, and provides certificated courses in Information Technology. These skills can then be used for paid work (including teleworking from home or from a telecentre, or voluntary sector work). The Derbyshire case-study will include a commentary on telecottaging which takes forward a number of the issues referred to briefly here

Saturday classes

All the colleges organise Saturday day-schools, usually grouped together on one Saturday per term. In general these follow the conventional curriculum described above. It did seem to me that there might be more scope for experimental or taster courses on a Saturday, with possible input from CCE in relation to access and accreditation, and the Rural Community Council in relation to workshops and conferences on rural development issues. Clearly attendance at a Saturday day-school can be much easier for people living in remote areas or with family responsibilities than weekly attendance. It also offers potential for providing childcare, since larger numbers of courses/workshops/conferences can be offered at the same time.

Staffing Facilities for Groups

These issues are dealt with in the introductory material on Community Colleges, and in the microstudy in section 5.

Adults in the 6th form

The mixing of 16-19 and adult students is no longer as controversial as it once seemed. Professional claims that teaching adults is a different activity from teaching young people have been overtaken by the reality of the very large numbers (often over 50%) of FE students who are over 19. In the Community College, of course, the students may well be returning to what for them has already been a "site of failure". However, in general opportunities to join 6th form classes (in one case 4th and 5th form classes too) have been eagerly taken up, if not in vast numbers. One adult education organiser described the relationship between younger and older students as "terribly beneficial to both of them": younger students have the study skills, adults bring wider life experience, and by their commitment to their studies emphasise to the younger ones their importance. However, only 12 adults were involved, a fact that becomes unsurprising when one takes account of the fact that an "A" level course requires 4 attendances on 4 days at different times! At Rye, adults in the 6th form is a very recent innovation: there were 3 students in the first year, then 27 in the second, and numbers are still growing. Several women are doing NVQs in Business Studies, with linked work experience. One man ended up studying in the 5th form with his daughter, and his involvement with the school has led to his becoming a parent governor.

From the Community College point of view, additional adult students can have a very positive effect on viability of 6th form options, and it is difficult to see why more colleges do not adopt the usual FE college model of blocking "A" level courses into 2 sessions per week, with possible extra tutorial support if required at another time during the week. Social facilities for adults within the Community College would enable adults to feel more "at home" in this environment. It is a question of the extent to which the adult work in general is seen as integral to the mission of the Community College rather than an add-on extra. "Community", as in so many other contexts, is conceived in a relatively narrow way.

CCE courses and WEA courses

CCE courses are run at 5 of the Community Colleges, and WEA courses in 1. The nature of the CCE offer is outlined in section 4.1, and the WEA provision in 4.6.

Car share

One Community College advertised an organised car share scheme, and informal arrangements appeared to be in place at most colleges. The existence of an advertised facility seemed to be an important step on the road to identifying participation in adult learning as a shared or networked experience (fundamentally social) rather than an individual consumer experience. I was led to reflect as a non-car-owner on my own practice: if going to an event run by a club or society to which I belong, I would always attempt to share transport with others; in the case of an event that I was attending as an individual, it would seldom occur to me to rely on other people for transport. A further consideration here is that many women are concerned for their personal safety: the Uplands Needs Analysis showed that 83% of men but only 39% of women were prepared to offer lifts (McGrath 1992:28). Probably similar figures would apply to accepting lifts.

The adult bursary scheme

The financing of adult learning is a crucial issue. For those adults dependent on the local economy rather than the commuting and retirement economies, wage rates in the countryside are considerably lower than in urban areas. It was suggested to me by the Sussex Rural Community Council (RCC) that up to 20% of rural people in East Sussex live at or below the officially recognised poverty level. The problem is particularly acute for women. As figure 2 shows, more women in East Sussex work part-time (22.7% of the labour force) than full-time (20.4%). Even among men, the numbers of male part-time workers had reached 9.1%. Taken together with the comments in section 1 on rising unemployment, and also the way finance determines access to essential communication services such as cars and telephones, it is clear that finance is going to be a major barrier to participation in adult learning. As Cathles and Fazaeli commented in relation to their work in rural Leicestershire: "Work is mostly part-time and poorly paid. Again, problems are exacerbated by lack of transport, long travel time and high travel costs." (Cathles and Fazaeli 1993:108).

The importance of the Bursary Scheme is that while, at one level, accepting the very considerable constraints on local authority financing, it demystifies the procedure for allocating "discretionary" awards to non-HE students by setting up a scheme, administered by the Careers Service, with clear criteria and priorities. To be eligible to apply, adults must be unemployed, in receipt of a range of state benefits, or working part-time. Courses must lead to qualifications

or access to HE and be related to career intentions. Course-based priorities are: Manufacturing, Construction, Financial and other business services, Leisure and Tourism, Access courses, Foundation Art, full-time BTEC courses, GCSEs and "A" levels which bring students up to matriculation requirements. (Note: subjects are listed in this order, but it is not suggested that they are in any order of priority). Support can include books and equipment, childcare and travel costs as well as fees.

The Bursary Scheme, with its emphasis on careers outcome, presupposes a guidance structure. This does not exist at an overall county level, but can be clearly seen in the rural area around Rye and Battle, where a rural outreach guidance project based on Hastings College works closely with the local Careers Service, based at the Rye Community College. The Outreach Guidance drop-in takes place on Monday mornings, while the Careers Service is open every Wednesday for adults for individual guidance, careers library, computer aided guidance, and to discuss bursary applications. (See also section 4.2, below).

As of early December 1993, the Bursary Scheme was suspended until April 1994, as the money allocated to it had run out. While officers at County Hall may have been surprised at the popularity of the scheme, adult education workers were certainly not. It is not clear at the point of writing whether this scheme will become yet another victim of cuts in local authority budgets.

4. Other Providers of Adult Education in East Sussex

4.1 Centre for Continuing Education (CCE), University of Sussex

CCE provides a range of courses in both East and West Sussex. The majority of provision is, however, based on the urbanised coastal strip and in the so-called "silicon corridor" between Burgess Hill and Gatwick Airport. Courses are held at 35 locations outside Brighton and the University Campus. Indeed, the most surprising feature of provision is not the low number of rural courses, but the very small number held in Hastings, a major centre of population. However, provision in the smaller towns and villages seldom extends beyond 1 or 2 classes. Further the curriculum is very limited. At Rye, in the existing (1993) Rural Development Area (RDA), CCE offers Practical Writing (Creative Writing rather than Literacy), French Novels in Translation and the Romantic Revolution in Art. At Herstmonceaux in the newly designated RDA, the only CCE course is Local History. CCE provision is typical of the legacy of the University Extra-Mural Department provision. A majority of courses are in areas such as Art, History and Literature, shorn of the sense of social purpose which originally illuminated "the movement". They represent Gellner's (1983) notion of the "cultivated" or "garden" cultures which in the modern period came to replace the traditional "wild" culture, perhaps best represented in East Sussex by the Bonfire Night traditions (see section 5). Bauman has used this contrast to show how "The emergence of modernity was such a process of transformation of wild cultures into garden cultures" (Bauman 1987:51), and has gone on to demonstrate the crucial role of education and the new conceptualisation of "culture" as key parts of this process.

At the same time, there has been a significant increase in such subjects as Women's Studies, Ecology, certain kinds of Local History work and Cultural Studies, which represent new ways of conceptualising the critical contribution to knowledge in the Extra-Mural tradition. Additionally, CCE provides a number of certificated courses and access courses (see section 5 for details of the Crowborough Access course), and is likely to develop further certificated

courses and part-time degree courses in the future. Yet as was pointed out to me, this assumes a major shift in the target audience, as a majority of current CCE students do not want certification, either because they already have university degrees, or because they are retired and do not see the point.

4.2 (Further Education) Colleges

The colleges at Hastings, Brighton, Eastbourne and Lewes provide extensive opportunities for adults as well as younger students. There are considerable conceptual difficulties in analysing this provision. Contact was made with two colleges (Lewes Tertiary College and Hastings College of Arts and Technology). Both run adult education services as relatively discrete services, but both also have adult students following a variety of vocational courses in other departments.

The Lewes full-time prospectus is clearly directed at younger students, with adults portrayed as staff and young people as students. 2 pages out of 48 are devoted to 4 "student viewpoints", with photos. The students portrayed have clearly been chosen for their physical attractiveness rather than their typicality as students! Hastings follows a similar pattern, with the only obviously adult students in the full-time prospectus those in the English for Overseas Students (i.e. EFL rather than ESOL) section. Adult students, then, are not generally expected to be following full-time courses. The overall impression given is that adults are still represented as, and perceived to be, marginal in Further Education, despite substantial increases in the proportion of adult students in the colleges. The approach to part-time courses is more functional, with no photos, and a large number of courses listed in relatively small space.

At Hastings, the Department of Adult and Community Education runs courses in Adult Basic Education (ABE), ESOL, Art, Fitness and Health, Languages, Office Skills and an "other courses" section that occupies one quarter of the prospectus. Other specialised courses are run by the college departments. At Lewes the range of vocational courses is much smaller (the contrast is between a local FE college and a larger regional college) and all courses for adults presented together.

Both colleges run out-stations. Lewes has an adult education centre in the town (Riverside) and a centre in Newhaven. Classes are also held in Peacehaven, and in 9 village locations in the Lewes district. For example, Chailey has 8 classes, 7 of them at the local school, including photography, Information Technology and languages. Until recently Lewes was also responsible for provision at Seaford, but this has now been taken on by the Community College. One result is the following ambiguous statement in the Lewes part-time prospectus: "Seaford is not included in our part-time brochure this year. Responsibility for courses there now rests with Seaford Head Community College - however, we welcome students from Seaford into any of our courses and look forward to a successful new relationship." Hastings operates on a number of sites in Hastings town and in Bexhill. It has a centre at Rye, and shares responsibility for the adult education provision at Thomas Peacocke Community College in Rye.

The two colleges and the joint provision in Rye will now be considered separately:

Lewes Tertiary College

There is a combination of FEFC-funded (Schedule 2) work and LEA-funded (non-Schedule 2) work. There is a substantial Access course with guaranteed places at the universities of Brighton and Sussex. Subject area modules on the Access course include Science, Computing, Teacher Training, Humanities and Social Science. The number of places has recently doubled to 80. There is a heavy demand, with unemployment meaning that students opt for full-time access rather than part-time routes. A note in the 1993/94 prospectus says they are full for September 93 but to enquire in January 94 for September 94. FEFC funding has demanded an increase in full-time student numbers too. There is also a pre-access provision with 120 students. Access courses attract people from a wide area, including Hastings and the rural parts of the county. Special Needs provision accounts for 250 students, and these courses are run in conjunction with the LEA and Social Services. The ESOL section is small, but there are about 150 ABE students divided between Lewes, Newhaven, Peacehaven and Seaford. The college emphasises the ALBSU quality standard of 4hrs/wk, usually made up of 2 hrs tuition plus 2 hour workshop. ABE students are encouraged to progress to pre-GCSE and Return to Study courses. The college is part of the Wealden Consortium and Community Colleges bid via Lewes for Schedule 2 funds. The Adult Education co-ordinator at the college recognises the unequal nature of this relationship (see also section 5 for the Community College perspective on this) and feels that the LEA itself should be able to act as sponsor of its own institutions.

Analysis of the enrolment figures at the college shows that small numbers of students do indeed come from rural areas. However, it is difficult to get into Lewes by public transport from many villages in the area. Buses are infrequent, often follow circuitous routes and seldom run in the evenings. There are frequent changes to both the routes and the timetables. Most of the non-Schedule 2 LEA provision is seen to appeal to middle-class people who are also car-owners. Fees are high and concessions very limited. There is a standby system whereby students on state benefits can get free places if there are empty places on a course, but this only currently provides for 32 students. Child-care on site is limited and expensive.

The curriculum is not substantially different from the Community Colleges, except that use of college facilities means a wider choice of courses in the Business Studies, Information Technology, and Care, Community and Health Studies programme.

Hastings College of Arts and Technology

As indicated, this is a larger and more varied institution than Lewes. There is considerable concern here about the implications of the 1992 FEHE Act on the future pattern of provision for adults. The REPLAN project in Sussex (1987-89), which focused on the educational needs of unemployed people in rural areas, argued strongly for a coherent county strategy for adult education. But with the colleges now independent from the LEA and competition rather than co-operation identified as "a good thing", there is some pessimism about whether such a strategy is achievable. For example, the WEA "Learning from life" courses (section 4.7, below) cover very similar ground to the Hastings New Horizons course, and similar provision elsewhere in the county. One respondent felt that two to three years ago there had been an opportunity to really "do something" in the rural areas, but that despite or indeed because of deteriorating economic conditions, the moment had passed. This respondent described it as like living in a house with moving walls - and the walls have tightened inwards in recent times.

An important part of college provision is Adult Basic Education, which is seen as part of the core provision. Educational guidance and learning support as also seen as ongoing aspects of support for adult students. Thus it is possible to recognise in Hastings the embryo of the kind of integrated system colleges need to offer if they are to become genuinely "open" to adults:

1. A co-ordinated approach to guidance: on entry (including outreach and advocacy); during the course; on exit (access to specialised courses, Higher Education, and Careers Advice). This includes courses which specifically emphasise the tentative nature of adults decisions to return to study (Figure 3).

2. Study support covering possible needs in Basic Skills (English, Maths, Information Technology), English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL), general study skills. There should also be access to Open Learning materials and modular courses which will allow adult students to advance at their own pace.

3. An adult atmosphere. Adults have as much need of personal tutorial support as younger students. Social spaces defined as for the use of "older" students can contribute to the formation of creative and supportive networks among adult students.

4. The necessary financial support to pursue studies. This includes not only schemes such as the bursary scheme, but the right to study while unemployed without loss of benefit.

Rye - patterns of co-operation

Rye is unusual in East Sussex in having two layers of adult education provision. There is provision at the Community College (Thomas Peacocke) and at an Adult Education Centre in the old town run as an outpost of Hastings College. While in neo-liberal ideology, competition is seen as a positive benefit to the customer/client, it is also clear that it favours those with "power to choose" (Johnston 1993). I understand this power to be based on previous educational success, feeling confident about how to find your way around the adult educational system, and having money and transport to access the system. By the same token, competition disadvantages those who are uncertain, need to build confidence and motivation, and financially deprived. So it is encouraging to find that co-operation is actively encouraged in the Rye area, although it is likely to become increasingly difficult under current funding arrangements and competitive practices.

The joint prospectus also represents a move beyond the usual Community College prospectus in visually highlighting important *aspects* of provision as well as discrete courses. This includes ABE, ESOL, Return to Study. There are also entries relating to provision at Plumpton Agricultural College, Open University and the Health Education Council's "Save-a-Life" Campaign. Generally speaking it offers a more open, less constrained, view of the potential of adult learning.

However, the problem of cognitive dissonance, that sense that "adult education is not for me", that it does not address the most pressing problems of self, is not helped by the location of adult

education facilities in Rye. The Hastings College Centre in Rye is within the Citadel - the conservation area within the old city walls. Car-parks, public transport and the market, which attracts people into Rye from the surrounding villages, are all at the bottom of the town. The Centre was described to me as "lovely - but there's a psychological barrier between what goes on inside and what goes on outside." Thus the work of the Rye and Winchelsea Network, the drop-in outreach sessions in the villages, and the collaborative efforts between Hastings College and Thomas Peacocke Community College (established in 1993) can all be seen as attempts to "bridge the gap." It must also be added that recognition of the existence of the gap was a necessary first step in this process.

There is no doubt that the existence of the RDA has been a key element in unlocking additional resources in Rye. In 1988/89, REPLAN officers from East Sussex carried out an outreach survey of the Rural Development Area around Rye to assess local education and training needs. The Outreach Project which emerged from this survey has been funded by the RDC, ESCC Economic Development, ESCC Further Education, Sussex TEC and Rother District Council (McGrath 1993:1) The workplace nursery at Thomas Peacocke will provide additional places for adult education students on 2 mornings a week and is funded by ESCC, RDC and the school.

The New Horizons course itself has been an important outcome of the Rural Outreach project in the Rye area. It is aimed at women returning to paid work and learning, and runs for 10 weeks, one morning per week. There is funding for a crèche or childminders if necessary. Courses such as New Horizons and the existence of drop-in provision for educational guidance were just two ways of bridging the gap between what goes on in the Adult Education Centre and people who have never identified with such provision. To put it another way, it begins to address the cognitive dissonance between people's everyday experience of life and the discourse of adult educators. It is important also to recognise that New Horizons is not sharply separate from other forms of provision. Some New Horizons students have moved on to GCSE and "A" level courses, both as evening classes and as "adults in the 6th form". As mentioned in section 3, the latter provision has included a number of women studying NVQ Business Studies with a work experience element.

In general the Rural Outreach project found it much easier to locate women than men. Women are much more "visible" in a local community than men, especially through their patterns of shopping and child-care. Unemployed men tend to be very isolated, and to feel more stigmatised than women by unemployment. Thus the creation of a Job Club and drop-in Job Centre in Rye has been a positive move, but there is still a question-mark over how to make successful education and training provision for this group. It should also be kept in mind that the notion of separate education and training needs of the unemployed has been frequently criticised in recent years, not least by the present author. The REPLAN project in Sussex concluded:

> *The project team ... does not believe that unemployed adults have needs which in general are specific to themselves; their needs are shared with many other groups especially those people who have, for whatever reason, been unable to make good use of their school opportunities or who have been left behind by the rapid changes in technology, employment and knowledge.* (Badham 1989:13)

It must also be recorded that the Rye Centre of Hastings College has suffered during 1993 from low enrolments which reflect in part high fee levels. The November 1993 newsletter of the New Horizons group commented:

> *You may be aware that a vast range of Adult Education is offered in a very smart booklet issued by Hastings College for classes to be held in Rye. You may also be aware that, due to low numbers, many classes never get off the ground.... Nowadays, everything must pay for itself and the FE Centre is no exception. Numbers are down on enrolment this year (we think this is because the classes are too expensive....) and the message is clear that if we do not use the FE Centre, it may not be available for use another year.*

4.3 Plumpton College

Plumpton College is the East Sussex Agricultural College. It occupies a site west of Lewes, and has an outpost in the eastern part of the county at the Battle Out Centre, Ivyland Farm, Battle. A programme of part-time courses is offered for adult students. The curriculum is surprisingly wide, including not just agriculture, horticulture and smallholding courses, but also Countryside related (e.g. Beekeeping, Shooting), Turfculture, Commercial Floristry and Flower-Arranging, Garden, Equestrian, Machinery, Viniculture. In this sense, Plumpton College represents a determined attempt to diversify in a changing rural scene. However, the extent of knowledge of its activities may be a problem - only the joint Rye prospectus of those seen by the author mentions its work.

4.4 Sussex Rural Community Council

If Plumpton emphasises the continuities of rural England, the work of the Sussex RCC is an attempt to come to terms with social and economic change in the countryside. It is concerned with the infrastructure of rural life (public transport, roads, village halls, parish councils) and emphasises the village as a living community in which people work, learn and are politically and socially involved. At the same time, the attempt to reconceptualise rural work, and its educational and training needs, contains risks as well as advantages. For example a recent conference on "Rural Sussex at work", organised by the RCC, concluded that it was necessary to raise awareness of rural Sussex as a place to work in order to:

> *create an education and training culture in Sussex*
>
> *ease the instinctive policies of restraint exercised by most local authorities*
>
> *gain public acceptance of economic activity as central to the life of the countryside* (Sussex RCC 1992)

While it is immediately apparent that two industries often accepted as "compatible" with rural areas (farming and seaside tourism) have wreaked havoc upon the landscape of rural Sussex, the conclusions of this conference still beg questions about what *does* constitute "suitable" economic activities in rural areas, and how democratic control should be exercised over planning procedures. For example, there seems little point in setting up economic activities in rural areas if the motive is simply to shift employment (and skilled workers, presumably) from

the town. The benefit for rural areas is likely to be more part-time, low-paid jobs, since the majority of skilled and professional jobs will go to incomers. Yet this seems to be what the Chief Executive of Cumbria TEC is advocating: "Rural places are excellent places to live and work which ought to be eminently saleable to urban organisations contemplating re-location because of environmental, social and lifestyle advantages; for example, there is less crime, better schools and reduced journey to work time." (CORT 1993). People living in rural communities regard all three of these items as controversial!

The education and training role of the RCC is exercised in a number of ways. Firstly, it provides support to the representative structure of rural life - the parish councils, and in particular Parish Clerks. This is mainly through offering local tutorial support for the CertHE, DipHE and degree courses in Local Policy of the Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education (C&GCHE). Secondly, there is currently an additional TEC-funded post in the RCC to look at the training needs of voluntary organisations in East Sussex, of which there are some 2,500. An RSA Diploma in the organisation of community groups is available with a modular structure and an emphasis on putting together a portfolio of work; this in turn can be used as evidence of prior learning and counted towards the C&GCHE Diploma. It is recognised that people have both personal and community objectives. A typical example here would be a rural playgroup, where a woman wants to be able to contribute towards this and other local community projects, but also has a developing motivation to return to study in the future. Thirdly, training events are held on a wide range of subjects, with the emphasis moving towards economic development (e.g. the possibility of small businesses or local shops in villages and small towns). Staff at the Sussex RCC recognised that they have considerable local choice on what issues to concentrate on in their work. Thus it will be an important comparative issue to discover what emphasis is placed on training in the RCCs in the remaining 3 case-studies.[3]

The overall body representing the 38 RCCs is Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE). Their Rural Adult Education project (1984-89) has been central to introducing to rural England ideas about community economic development whose global origins appear to be in the countries of the South, and whose entry to Europe has been greatly helped by workers in Ireland (both North and South). *Doing by Learning* (ACRE 1989) acknowledges the significant role of University College Galway; equally I would want to emphasise the contribution made by Magee College in Derry (Shanahan 1993).

4.5 University of the Third Age (U3A)

U3A is active in East Sussex, with branches at Brighton (2), Eastbourne, Hastings, Lewes, Newhaven and Seaford. However, only the small branch at Ringmer could be said to be "rural". I have no information as to how many older people travel into these coastal fringe U3A groups from rural areas. Despite their totally voluntary principle, which means that potentially they can organise anything they want to in whatever way they want to, the curriculum looks like a combination of the extra-mural tradition (Eastbourne U3A even runs one joint course with CCE: "The heritage of Sussex") and LEA provision, though with more emphasis on "talking" than on "doing". Central lectures and meetings of the "subject" groupings of Philosophy, History and Literature for Eastbourne U3A are held at the Eastbourne College of Arts and

[3] Since completion of this report, Sussex Rural Community Council have published a report on the training provision and needs of voluntary organisations in both East and West Sussex (SRCC n/d).

Technology. Study groups (e.g. Current Affairs, Poetry, French Conversation, TV Watch) are held in people's own homes.

It is immediately clear what the difficulties are of applying this model to rural areas. Older people are a lot less likely to be mobile than younger ones. Further, the smaller the local population, the less likely it is that the kind of range of activities seen at Eastbourne, which then stands a good chance of recruiting well, can be offered. One possible compromise that might be offered by the Community Colleges at a village level is the supported self-study group, with a peripatetic tutor visiting occasionally in the role of facilitator. Another possibility would be to link such study groups into the WI network, since the WI has a long tradition of providing informal voluntary adult education.

4.6 Workers Educational Association (WEA)

WEA work has two main thrusts. The first of these - trade union work - has a full-time temporary Sussex organiser attached to it. Some courses are fixed through the Education Department of the TUC, while others are fixed directly with particular unions. It should be noted that other TUC work is contracted to the colleges. I have not been able to come to any conclusions about how far this work contributes to learning opportunities in rural areas, and this remains a research question to be answered.

The second strand is Liberal Adult Education, and the range of courses comparable to CCE provision. This work is co-ordinated through the tutor-organiser for Sussex (East and West) who is based in Brighton. He liaises with the voluntary branches to fix the programme. There are branches in Bexhill, Brighton , Brighton Women's branch, Crowborough, Hastings, Eastbourne, Lewes, Rye and Polegate. Both the "rural" branches (Crowborough and Rye) have a strong core of active members.

The WEA has traditionally stressed as outcomes personal enrichment and the notion of social purpose. Earning potential has generally not been considered as an outcome. However, the WEA in East Sussex has obtained funding from the BT Community Programme for a project known as "Learning from life". This has recently begun to offer a series of nine 10-week courses in the Hastings/Rother area. The sub-title (Making your experience count) places them firmly in the APEL/APL tradition. They are consciously designed as Return to Study courses, aimed particularly at women and unemployed people. A crèche is provided at one location and at other locations child-care can be paid for. In the event 5 of these courses are up and running - at Hastings (2; one is women only), St Leonards, Bexhill and Battle. (There is one additional course at Hastings which was not advertised). So this initiative has not in general attracted rural people, apart from the one at Battle. Courses at Rye and Robertsbridge have been cancelled. While this is perhaps unsurprising, it needs to be kept in mind that a community such as Robertsbridge has some 150 people "officially" unemployed, and that success in attracting even 10% would have made the course viable. The problem, as always with short-term initiatives of this kind, is that those in most need are the most difficult to recruit. Overall, "Learning from life" is a good illustration of the likely outcome of competitive initiatives in the adult learning field, and a useful reminder of the advantages of pooling resources in creative ways which match both the aspirations of adult learners and their difficulties in gaining access to provision.

5. The Microstudy - Wealden Sussex

The microstudy involved looking at provision in the northern part of the county, bordering on to Kent. It is an area of small towns and villages with limited local employment. A significant proportion of people commute to work, especially in London. There is also a proportion of people who have retired from well-paid jobs. The selected area includes the Community Colleges at Wadhurst (Uplands) and Crowborough (Beacon). I was particularly interested in seeing to what extent they provided for the inhabitants of the surroundings villages (map 4). Emphasis is placed on the Community College provision, but reference also made to other organisations (e.g. University of Sussex) which provide structured learning opportunities and to the kind of informal learning that might be expected to go on in voluntary organisations.

Uplands Community College (Wadhurst)

In 1977 the new Uplands Community College absorbed the existing Wadhurst Evening Institute. The provision was characterised by "traditional recreational courses", largely for women (Stinton 1990).

Wadhurst itself is a small country town (some would describe it as a large village) of 4,500 inhabitants, 7 miles from Tunbridge Wells (Kent) and 20 miles from the Sussex coast. It has a direct train service to London via Tunbridge Wells, though the railway station itself is well over a mile from the town centre. Apart from local services and 10 small industrial units on the Durgates Industrial Estate, there are few local jobs, and most people travel to work in Crowborough, Tunbridge Wells or London. The new Wadhurst Business Park contains several vacant units. Planning is mainly concerned with protecting the local environment and controlling residential development, and there are no plans to increase employment potential (Wealden DC 1993:373-7). In summary: "It is the Council's aim for Wadhurst to maintain and enhance its residential character and its role as a local employment and service centre whilst protecting its environment, the rural fringe areas and the surrounding countryside from development that would be detrimental to its character" (idem:373).

Most of the provision is evening classes, though there is limited accommodation in the Youth Centre during the daytime. However, there is no crèche provision, though several possibilities have been discussed. A playgroup uses the Youth Centre 3 days a week, which means there is a free space there two days a week. Consideration has also been given to converting an ex-school keeper's house into a workplace nursery for the college, with additional places for adult students. This seemed typical of Uplands - there were many good plans (for Open Learning, Basic Education, Village classes for example) all of which foundered on the grisly combination of lack of public finance for Adult Education and the economics of rural provision which prevent the economies of scale that can be achieved in urban areas. The only permanent professional staffing is 0.5 (the remainder of the post deals with school teaching) and the holder of the post commented: "there is little time for long-term planning, visiting all tutors and classes, surveying local needs and wants, establishing community contacts and fostering community projects and initiatives; outreach work" (Stinton 1990). An HMI inspection emphasised the lack of professional support, the need for a community needs analysis and the inadequate support for Basic Education, a 2 hours per week post (Stinton 1990).

There is machinery in place which could provide a more responsive service if resources were available to pay for it. There is a Community Activities Advisory Committee which reports to

the Governing Body and includes Parish Council representatives, and there is a bi-monthly Contact Lunch, mainly attended by statutory and voluntary social services providers.

In addition to provision in Wadhurst, classes are held in the villages of Ticehurst (5 classes in prospectus), Mayfield (8), Lamberhurst (1) and Hurst Green (1). It should be noted here first that there is no clear contrast between Wadhurst and other villages in terms of size. Mayfield Ward (i.e. Mayfield and outlying hamlets) has 3,500 inhabitants and Ticehurst 3,100 (1991 census data). Uplands itself recruits from no less than 41 locations, with 77% of them coming from the traditional catchment area (1989 figures). Participation in the villages has tended to decrease, but this has been as a result of general funding cuts rather than deliberate policy. Thus Mayfield fell from a peak of 105 students in 85/86 to 57 in 89/90, Ticehurst from 83 in 84/85 to 53 in 89/90.

Barriers to participation

In 1991/92, a serious attempt was made to find a solution to the "community deficit" at Uplands, with the employment of a development (outreach) worker and the commissioning of an in-depth needs analysis of the area (McGrath 1992). This concentrated on the 16-20 and 21-45 year old age-groups. Overall, this report indicated that participation in adult education among the 21-45 year olds was discouraged by the high cost of courses (33% of men, 32% of women), the lack of local provision (36% of men, 19% of women), lack of transport (6% of men and 9% of women), lack of study support (12% of men, 3% of women) and lack of childcare (12% of men and 9% of women). Transport, which is often identified by adult education professionals as the major barrier to participation (one Sussex adult educator referred to it as "the beginning, middle and end" of the problem of rural adult education) came low on the list, with most of the respondents having access to a car. 22/63 of the men questioned had no educational qualifications, but only 12/198 women. However, a further 33 women had CSEs as highest qualification. 35/63 men and 107/198 women had left school at the minimum leaving age (15 or 16). The main conclusions of the study were:

- that adults in the 21-45 group needed more access to educational guidance
- that there was a considerable problem in relation to unqualified, unemployed men in the area
- that support was needed for a relatively large number of self-employed people struggling to establish themselves in a recession
- that specialised provision was needed for women returners
- that child-care was a high priority to support daytime provision for women, and that carers themselves had training needs which could be met through PPA/Community Education collaboration
- that there was potential for supported home study provision in the area
- that transport was a major problem, although for fewer people than expected, and would need ongoing attention.

The outreach worker's report (Scott 1992) is extremely brief. Achievements include a Community Profile of Ticehurst (a single A3 card sheet calendar with names, telephone numbers and addresses for local organisations and activities); plans for a PPA workers course; some women returners provision (short, free 6-week courses run by the Careers Service); a list of people interested in skills-sharing; a proposal to use the school minibus to bring adult

students from the villages to Uplands. A Keep Fit class had been established in Ticehurst for over 60s, but this is an independent initiative by a 73 year old retired tutor, using the premises of an Old People's Home. Scott concluded that: "There is a limit of what can be achieved given the level of resourcing for Community Education and obviously priorities will have to be agreed." (Scott 1992:5)

Over a year later, no economic way of using the school minibus for transport had been found, there was some informal car-sharing gong on among students, only the GCSE Human Biology had sufficient Open Learning students to provide local tutorial support (other students had to travel in to Hastings College), lines of communication were kept open with community groups, but whenever it came to putting on provision outside of Uplands, the additional costs of hiring premises, support etc were prohibitive. PPA courses have started but no childcare is offered, so children have to be cared for collaboratively by the students themselves. The most significant outcome appears to have been a general raising of the profile of adult education in the area. Enrolments have risen consistently since 1990:

October 1990	499	October 1992	860
October 1991	522	October 1993	931

The single biggest increase (65%) was from 91 to 92 and coincides with the work of the Outreach Worker and the McGrath report. Against this must be set the 50% reduction in funding from 92 to 93, which means there is even less scope for meeting the needs of people who cannot afford the high fees, or for putting on any courses which are less cost-effective than classes in the main centre at Uplands. It is hard to ignore the irony too that the more student numbers rise, the less time the professional staff have for anything other than "maintenance" work.

Informal adult learning

One of the aims of this study was to examine in some way the hypothesis that much adult learning in rural areas takes place in informal setting. It would be impossible to study this at county level, and given the resources available for this research, only the briefest comment can be offered. Many of these informal settings involve groups of people meeting in village halls and church premises in the context of local organisations such as the Women's Institute (W.I.). These are often more accessible to local people both in the physical sense, and because people may feel much more at home in them than in an educational institution. It is worth quoting McGivney's field-work at length here, since it gives a particularly vivid sense of reasons for non-participation in adult education, and also because it reflects the potential of voluntary organisations as learning sites for unskilled workers with few educational qualifications:

> *Some members of this (unskilled) group were overtly hostile to education, particularly in the rural area, where 19 out of 20 respondents claimed to have absolutely no interest in taking up any learning opportunities, citing school experience as one of the many reasons. Nineteen rural respondents had received no education or training since leaving school, although 4 had been engaged in other group learning activities. The unskilled rural respondents were muchmore likely to be participating in community and leisure activities than their counterparts in the suburban and urban areas.* (McGivney 1990:69)

All the East Sussex Community Colleges offer facilities for community groups to meet and to use equipment. There is normally a hire charge for this facility. At Wadhurst, this has developed into an affiliation scheme which offers such facilities at preferential rates. Three of these activities (Drama, Photography and Wine clubs) have developed from Adult Education classes. I have argued elsewhere (Payne 1991) that it is important in providing adult education in support of leisure to distinguish between on the one hand learning that is derived from taking part in leisure activities and learning to take part in those activities, and on the other hand the provision of facilities for people already skilled in the activity. Club provision is a cost-effective model which might relieve some of the pressure on the adult education budget, but it does not of course determine what the priorities should be for resources released in this way! The remaining groups are mainly using sports and musical facilities.

The overall argument is very complex at this point. On the one hand, because these clubs meet on educational premises, they are more likely to attract members who already have a positive attitude to education in general to participate in their informal learning activities. At the same time, their existence on school premises may also serve as an access point for other adults who would not normally use school premises, and may therefore be attracted at a later point to more formal courses within the centre. The current study lacks the resources to collect the empirical data which might clarify this apparent contradiction.

Adult Education and social need

Recent studies have suggested very strongly that poverty, unemployment and isolation are again becoming major features of the English countryside. Others have pointed out that the post-1945 period constitutes the only substantial period in history when this has not been the case. However, given the changes in the social fabric of the English village, poverty is no longer a shared experience, the common lot, and "brings only a sense of exclusion" (Newby 1988:40).

One example of a response to social need in the Wealden area is the existence of the Wadhurst Social Action project. This is a voluntary service which aims to "fill the gap where existing services do not already meet the need, it is not intended to replace those services." (this leaflet is reproduced as appendix 2). It can provide help with transport (e.g. for hospital, church or shopping), home visiting, respite for carers, shopping, baby-sitting and letter-writing. A second example concerns 27 school students from the Community College who are involved in a range of community placements, including long-stay hospitals, old people's homes and gardening for the elderly. A final example is the Parents Alone support group meeting at the Youth Club on Friday mornings alongside the playgroup provision.

These brief examples of social need must be set in the context of a relatively well-off area in which many people depend (directly or indirectly) on commuter jobs in the London area, or have retired from well-paid jobs. Arguably the experience of social need in such an area is more intense than in an inner city area where the existence of larger numbers of people in the same situation is more likely to lead to intervention by the local state or well-established charitable effort.

The divided village

The existence of unmet social needs alongside affluence must be placed in the wider cultural setting of the "metropolitan village" (i.e. villages whose economic well-being depends on the

economy of a nearby large city rather than on the local economy). It is worth quoting at length from Newby, who had the villages of the London commuter belt very much in mind when he wrote:

> *Indeed newcomers often oppose **any** change, including both housing and commercial development, even where, in the judgement of the locals, it is necessary for the continued well-being of the village. Articulate and influential, the newcomers have been able to ensure that local planning policies reflect their point of view. They operate what might be termed the 'drawbridge effect': having made it into their rural idyll, they wish to keep the village, as they would see it, unspoiled. Such attitudes are most common in the south of England where there are now powerful local political forces lined up against any form of village growth. Given half the chance they would designate virtually all of the countryside as Green Belt and veto any form of development.*
>
> *Such changes mean that a whole new social balance now underpins village life. In many, if not most, villages it is the newcomers who are now in the majority and they who influence the future shape of village development. The locals can find, somewhat disconcertingly, that their needs are overlooked. This applies particularly to those who are vulnerable to any decrease in the provision of local services, especially transport. The poor, the elderly and the disabled cannot step into their cars and drive to the nearest urban centre to take advantage of a full range of services and amenities. At the same time the affluent majority is often unable or unwilling to foot the rapidly-rising bill for public service provision.*
>
> *In many areas what has emerged is an alarming degree of social polarization, involving not only subjective differences in lifestyles, but actual living standards, between those who have chosen to live in the countryside and those who have been stranded there by decades of social and economic change over which they have had no control. Two nations in one village has increasingly become the norm* (idem).

A good example of this is Mayfield, one of the outposts of Wadhurst. Mayfield is a classic picture-postcard village, which includes an independent Roman Catholic girls school. One of the Uplands classes (English Literature) is actually held in a room provided free of charge at the school. It is an afternoon class, mainly of older women but also some younger women who feel they have missed out on their own education. The common thread is a desire to "talk about books". The theme is "Women's writing" and the participants share cars to come to the class. Another class is Architecture, held in the tutor's home in an adjacent small village. It is important to recognise that this is a CCE class, and in that sense CCE is an actor in, as well as an observer of, this divided rural scene. Other classes are held at the village hall: Watercolour painting, Exercise, Flower Arranging and French. The Bridge class has recently closed. These classes, like the many clubs and societies in the village atract a "hard core of the village involved in lots and lots of things". Clubs include the Local History Society, and the Needlework Guild, while speakers at the two W.I. groups (afternoon and evening) are a further source of informal education for the "joiners" in the village.

The dominant middle-class culture is reflected at one level in the Drama Club and biennial music festival, at a second level by the ascendancy of the local Conservative Party (the only political organisation listed in "What's on in Mayfield 1993"), and at a third level by the busy calendar of charitable fund-raising events. The local newsletter carries separate reports from Neighbourhood Watch schemes in Mayfield itself and in the nearby village of Five Ashes. "Local people" work in agriculture, local shops and the school, with the "village women" finding employment as cleaners, cooks and shop assistants. But the majority of people who work commute out of the village. The main cultural activity for the "locals" is the Bonfire Society, an institution found in many Sussex villages. Each year the bonfire has a theme, elaborate costumes are designed, and village groups go from one village to another in a series of bonfire beginning in late August and culminating in the celebrations at Lewes on November 5th.

In the complex and divided society of these Wealden villages, it is not at all clear what if any intervention adult education might be in people's lives. For example, the unemployment figure of 88 or 5.9% (September 1993) includes both self-employed business people and commuters hit by the recession and also unskilled labourers. While clearly the needs of both groups ought to be met, the former group are likely to have more cultural resources to deal with the crisis than the latter.

Beacon Community College, Crowborough

Crowborough is at the extreme end of the range of what might be called "the rural". It consists of a town of 21,000 inhabitants and a surrounding area of villages which overlaps with the outlying villages of both Wadhurst and Uckfield (map 4). The town lies on the branch railway from Oxted to Uckfield. This line is unusual in that it is the only non-electrified line in South-East England (apart from the Hastings-Rye-Ashford line) and there are persistent rumours that it may eventually be closed. Thus although there is a strong commuter population, it owes its recent growth more to the M25 than the railway, being a particularly popular choice of home for travelling representatives of firms. The two largest employers are both High Tech firms, and there is the usual array of service industries to be found in towns of this size.

Beacon Community College is the largest school in East Sussex with 2,000 11-19 students. Although its designation as a Community College (in 1987) is more recent than Wadhurst, it has a more clearly defined management structure. Community education is run by a sub-committee of the Governing Body which has equal authority with other sub-committees. There is a full-time CE Manager in charge of youth and adult education work, and a 0.75 Adult Education organiser. With years 7 and 8 moving to a new site further out of town, there has been some scope (though very limited finance) for adult provision during the daytime. One prefab building has been converted for adult use (one classroom and a more informal room) and Sussex TEC money has been used to create a resources room on site as centre for the Basic Skills at Work project (see below).

The CE Manager accepted that the adult education student profile was largely "middle-aged, middle-class and female." Commuters (mainly men) contribute little to the life of Crowborough, and, if they do take adult education classes, are more likely to study as lunchtime or twilight students in London than in Crowborough. Since the general points about the adult education curriculum made in relation to Wadhurst apply equally well to Crowborough, they are not repeated here. Instead, attention is drawn to a number of features of adult education provision at Crowborough which emphasise the greater potential of a more

concentrated centre of population. No criticism of individual workers is implied, and the analytical emphasis here is on the different circumstances of the two centres.

The Access course

Crowborough is the largest centre of population in East Sussex without an FE or HE institution. With this in mind, the Community College and the Centre for Continuing Education at the University of Sussex have set up an Access course at Crowborough. This has recruited students from the surrounding area, including Wadhurst, Uckfield and the villages. The course occupies one daytime session plus two evenings and recruits mainly women with access to cars. Qualifications on entry to the course range from none to "A" levels taken some years ago, and there is a strong emphasis on study skills. Applicants for the 1994 course (the course runs from January to December) include a redundant Catering Manager, a single mother whose child has just started at primary school and a current GCSE Maths student. A 10-week New Horizons course now acts as a feeder to Access, with 6/10 current new Horizons students applying for the Access course. Whereas the Access students on the first two courses (92 and 93) came from a relatively wide area, the New Horizons students are more local (50% Crowborough, 25% surrounding villages, and 25% from further away) and so the effect of this will be to give the Access course a profile closer to the original intentions. The target audience was defined in the course document as "those living in a part of the region where access to formal further education is restricted and difficult." Particular emphasis was placed on groups underrepresented in HE, especially women: "Women who left education with few or no qualifications and who are now seeking to return form one important group. The content of the course, its timetabling and the support offered to those who need childcare all have the needs of this group in mind."

From the point of view of CCE, the course has been a very satisfactory development, which complements rather than competes with other access provision in the East Sussex area. There is a common curriculum focus on gender/education/family, with Study Skills and Information Technology as core skills. Subject areas are Sociology, Literature and History. The course is open exit, with the main possibilities Sussex, West Kent College at Tunbridge Wells and London. The course is expensive and the County bursary scheme (see section 4.1, above) is very important to help students meet the fees of £300.

However, the future of the course is in doubt because of the changed role of CCE, the emphasis on accredited courses, and what appears to be the general DfE view that Access courses should be in FE rather than HE. In view of the existence of a related research project within CCE, no further comment will be made here on institutional aspects of this debate. Both CCE and Crowborough seemed to be of the view that an existing course could be sustained within the CE structure, but that it would be very much more difficult to set up such a course from scratch in another rural centre in the future.

Skills at Work

The view was put to me that if Adult Education has always been a low priority within East Sussex County Council, then Adult Basic Education had been funded at "Micawber" levels. "Skills at Work" is linked with a 3-year ALBSU national project (1991-94) which seeks to enhance basic skills at work through a variety of partnerships with TECs and LEAs. The project at Crowborough involves a full-time project worker and the resource room mentioned above. 50% of the courses are held within this resource base, but others are held at Uckfield,

Wadhurst and on employer premises (especially Mayhew Chicken factory). There is provision for individual study as well as group work, and reference is to "skills" (e.g. oral skills, word processing, spelling, study skills) rather than "English and Maths". Currently there are 83 enrolments on 11 separate modules. Most students are employed, but there is also scope for including students who are in part-time or seasonal employment. The barriers that may be seen to hold back many of these students are not conventional ones of rural isolation, but the more universal problems of lacking basic educational skills and qualifications in an increasingly credentialist society. The County Basic Education co-ordinator referred directly to young men in their early 20s at Crowborough, with their own transport and determined to "go places". At the same time it takes personal courage within your own community to admit to these skills deficits, and this is another reason why the new approach seems more likely to succeed than the old one.

Skills at Work is an important development, as ABE in the rural Community Colleges was not strongly placed to meet either ALBSU quality standards or the FEFC Schedule 2 funding requirements. It represents a new departure. However, there is also concern that while it addresses those currently in employment but who are vulnerable because of lack of Basic Skills, it does not address the needs of the unemployed. It is also unclear what happens after 94. A 6-month project worker has just been appointed by the Wealden Consortium (Uckfield, Heathfield, Crowborough and Wadhurst) to build on the experience of "Skills at Work" and the BT Partnership Initiative at Uckfield and Heathfield, and to make recommendations for the future of the ABE work. The rationale for this post states:

> *Adult Basic Skills is seen as the foundation of all progression routes for adult learners, If access and progression issues in the rural area are to be addressed seriously, then the significance of Adult Basic Skills has certainly to be recognised. Poor levels of funding in the past, and the resulting limited organisational structures and provision, cannot be seen as the benchmark for the future. This has to be the time for change.*

Concern was also expressed about the relationship between the Wealden Consortium and Lewes Tertiary College, who sponsor their bids for Schedule 2 work. These centres are distant from Lewes, and the view was put to me that while increased collaboration over Schedule 2 work was inevitable and indeed desirable, that a partnership between the Wealden Colleges was more a meeting of equals than a collaboration involving Lewes. (Further elaboration is not offered, pending the conclusion of Mike Boice's M.A. thesis on the impact of the 1992 FHE Act in East Sussex).

What about the villages?

Unlike Wadhurst, Crowborough makes little attempt to run village classes. Fee levels, class sizes and premises hire all make the economics of village classes very difficult, in the absence of any special funding to encourage this. Village classes have run in the past but are no longer. In addition, there is a perception that the older structures of village life have been largely replaced in a number of villages by "commuter" and "retirement" values. Peace and quiet are the overriding values of this privatised village lifestyle, and any "public" provision (housing, youth clubs etc) seen as a threat rather than a service. In this context "serving the community" becomes a problematic concept. One of the last village classes had moved from the village hall into the college at Crowborough because it was too big for the premises. But since most students came by car, only 1 student dropped out as a result of the move. To the extent that the village class was "serving the local community" it is still being served.

Adult education: the political dimension

If the problems of access to Schedule 2 funding in rural areas represent one level of political problems, a further dimension is the future of the County Councils themselves. Within the tight government limits on local authority spending, the Lib-Lab administration which has governed in East Sussex since the May 1993 elections seems inclined to "do something" about social need. The Chair of Education is a Liberal Democrat. However, if the Wealden area were designated as a unitary authority, it might well have a built-in Conservative majority that might well regard low levels of public expenditure as its major objective. I was informed, for example, that one parish council, asked to consider helping to finance a hut for a local Youth Club, offered £80: the same village prides itself on having the lowest Council Tax in the district.

6. Conclusions. The Missing Links

> *Post-compulsory education is complex, fragmented and diverse. Professionals working in one part of the system often have little knowledge or understanding of the others. It is unrealistic to expect the public to understand the system if educationalists themselves have little sense of the whole.* (McGivney 1990:175)

In this first case-study, only the most tentative conclusions will be drawn. ACRE, at least, is realistic about the problems faced by adult education providers. What rang true in 1989 seems self-evident in 1993:

> *A word of caution; all adult education providers are going through a difficult phase of readjustment and restructuring. Partly this is because traditional types of work are being questioned, with increasing emphasis being given to targeting special groups, and to vocational training. Partly it is because budgets are tightening, and courses must very often now be self financing. This background must be understood when approaching educational providers. All is not gloom, however. Some educationalists will use the stresses of change to rule out new directions; others will, on the contrary, seize the opportunity to try out new ideas, especially if they can be shown to be relevant to the needs of the region and community.* (Denman et al 1989:22)

This seems to me to make a crucial point for an evaluatory report such as the present one: while those institutions which are innovating should be praised for that work, there seems little point in condemning colleagues who are experiencing the "sharp" end of financial and other constraints, and feel unable to do more than "hold the line" for the moment. At the same time, the role of "gate-keepers" (Centre Heads, Adult Tutors, CCE and WEA organisers) is identified as crucial to the prospects for adult education for social and economic change in rural areas. What seems clear is that the issues identified by the REPLAN project (1987-89) refuse to go away. These can be focused from the viewpoint of the learner:

> *It is often the further education taking places in areas like basic education, in the voluntary sector and through community schools and colleges that offers groups like unemployed adults important entry*

> *routes to more 'mainstream' provision. It is for this reason that the REPLAN Project team are concerned to see a* ***co-ordinated strategic planning system*** *which properly covers all types of provision.* (Badham 1989:3) (my emphasis). -
>
> or of the institution:
>
> *If there is a single message of the REPLAN experience in the County it is* ***the lack of cohesion in provision for adults****. The amount of energy that individuals or groups of staff put into making provision is impressive but often happens in spite of rather than with support from the existing system; it is stressful and wasteful of effort. It seems to the project team that there is a lack of adequate frameworks to co-ordinate efforts.* (Badham 1989:5) (my emphasis).

If the present report does nothing more than repeat those fundamental points, it will have served a purpose.

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Robertsbridge Community College Community Education Project.

Aim.

During the course of the coming year there will exist a package of community education courses/activities available for, and attractive to, as wide a range of people living in the community as is possible.

How can we achieve our aim?

We need INFORMATION from you, your sons and daughters, friends and neighbours, clubs and societies. Help us get the information we need by filling in the questionnaire below, asking others to do the same and returning it to me at the college.

Many thanks,

Andy Moore

---

1. What days of the week would be most convenient for you to take part in courses/activities etc (tick more than 1 box if you wish)

- Monday ☐
- Tuesday ☐
- Wednesday ☐
- Thursday ☐
- Friday ☐
- Saturday ☐
- Sunday ☐

2. What times of the day would be most convenient for you (tick more than one box if you wish)?

- 9.00am - noon ☐
- Noon - 3.30pm ☐
- 3.30pm - 6.00pm ☐
- 6.00pm - 9.00pm ☐

3. What type of course do you feel would be most useful to you (tick more than one box if you wish)?

- Academic course leading to a certificate, eg GCSE ☐
- Computer course, eg wordprocessing, spreadsheeting etc ☐
- General Interest Course, eg local history, birdwatching, quiltmaking cake decorating etc ☐
- First Aid courses, eg general first aid, first aid at work, babysitting etc ☐
- Technological/Artistic, eg wood/metal work, painting, jewelry making etc ☐
- Sporting/outdoor education leading to a certificate, eg. Duke of Edinburgh, coaching etc. ☐
- General sporting improvement/fitness/outdoor education courses ☐
- Others - please specify ☐

4. How would you get to the college site?

- Walk ☐
- Bicycle ☐
- Car ☐
- Bus ☐
- Train ☐
- Other ☐

5. Would problems with transport to and from the college site put you off/ prevent you from taking courses at the college.

- Yes ☐
- No ☐
- Sometimes ☐

6. What would be the most effective method of informing you of the courses on offer at the college:

- Leaflets taken home by pupils ☐
- Advertisments in the local paper ☐
- Advertisments in the Parish Magazine ☐
- Advertisments in village shop windows ☐
- Others (please specify) ☐

_____

_____

The college facilities may be used for other purposes besides courses. If you are a member of an organization, club or society looking for a venue where it can hold its meetings etc. please complete the form below:

Name of Club/Society: _____

Contact Name: _____

Contact Number (Daytime):_____ Evening: _____

How often would you wish to use the college facilities?

_____

_____

Description of the facilities you would need/like to have available:

_____

_____

_____

S.A.P.

(Social Action Project)

Wadhurst 784191

We care about anyone who needs help

S.A.P.

aims to provide practical neighbourly help, on a short term basis, to anyone living in Wadhurst.

S.A.P. is run by voluntary helpers. It is a free service, supported by donations, to help fill the gap where existing services do not already meet the need, it is not intended to replace those services.

S.A.P. can give practical help with:-

* Transport – to the surgery, to visit relatives in hospital, to go to shops, church, etc.
* Visiting the sick, lonely or disabled
* Looking after the housebound to relieve their regular carers
* Shopping for those in difficulties, fetching their prescriptions or library books
* Baby sitting in emergencies
* Letter writing

There are many similar problems that arise, where neighbours or relatives may not be able to help.

This is where S.A.P. comes in, either by arranging for one of our volunteers to help or by directing the caller to one of the existing services.

HOW TO CONTACT

S.A.P.

Telephone

Wadhurst 784191

The Office is open between 10am and 12noon on Tuesdays and Thursdays on the ground floor of the Methodist Church, Wadhurst. Outside those hours, messages left on our Ansafone will be dealt with promptly

Here is a sticker for your telephone

S.A.P.
PHONE
WADHURST 784191

Can you help us to help others?

S.A.P. always needs more volunteers. If you are interested in helping us to help others, at a time to suit you, please ring Wadhurst 784191 for more details.

Table 1: Population Projections 1985-2001

Table 4: Projected changes in age structure, 1985-2001, for selected English counties.

County/Year Total		Under 17	17-28	29-59	60 & over	Total
Lincolnshire						
1985	000s	121.3	102.2	214.2	122.5	560.3
2001	000s	140.2	87.0	298.3	121.3	646.8
1985	%	21.6	18.2	38.2	21.9	100.0
2001	%	21.6	13.5	46.1	18.8	100.0
Northumberland						
1985	000s	66.5	52.6	117.1	64.5	300.7
2001	000s	68.7	44.9	129.9	68.2	311.7
1985	%	22.1	17.4	38.9	21.4	100.0
2001	%	22.0	14.4	41.7	21.9	100.0
East Sussex						
1985	000s	126.3	112.9	237.7	205.5	682.4
2001	000s	143.4	96.9	301.1	198.7	740.2
1985	%	18.5	16.5	34.8	30.1	100.0
2001	%	19.4	13.1	40.7	26.8	100.0
Cornwall & Isles of Scilly						
1985	000s	92.5	74.1	166.6	110.5	443.7
2001	000s	118.0	73.6	222.4	106.9	520.9
1985	%	20.8	16.7	37.5	24.9	100.0
2001	%	22.7	14.1	42.7	20.5	100.0
Shropshire						
1985	000s	90.4	74.6	148.8	76.5	390.3
2001	000s	109.1	67.0	199.5	81.3	456.9
1985						
%	23.2	19.1	38.1	19.6	100.0	
2001	%	23.9	14.7	43.7	17.8	100.0

Source: Unpublished data provided by OPCS.

Source: *Faith in the Countryside*

Figure 1: Community education in East Sussex

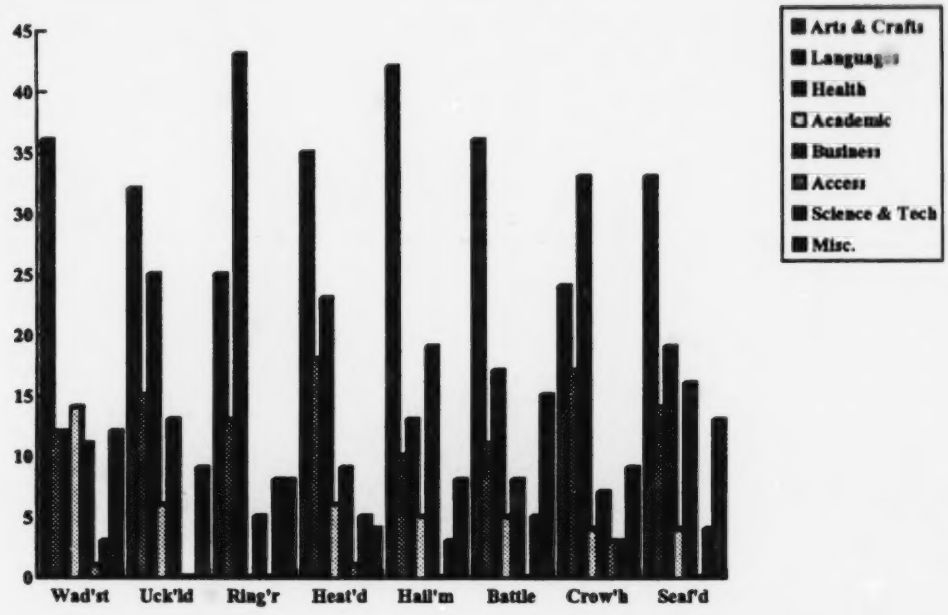


Figure 2: Profile of Rural Workforce: East Sussex 1993

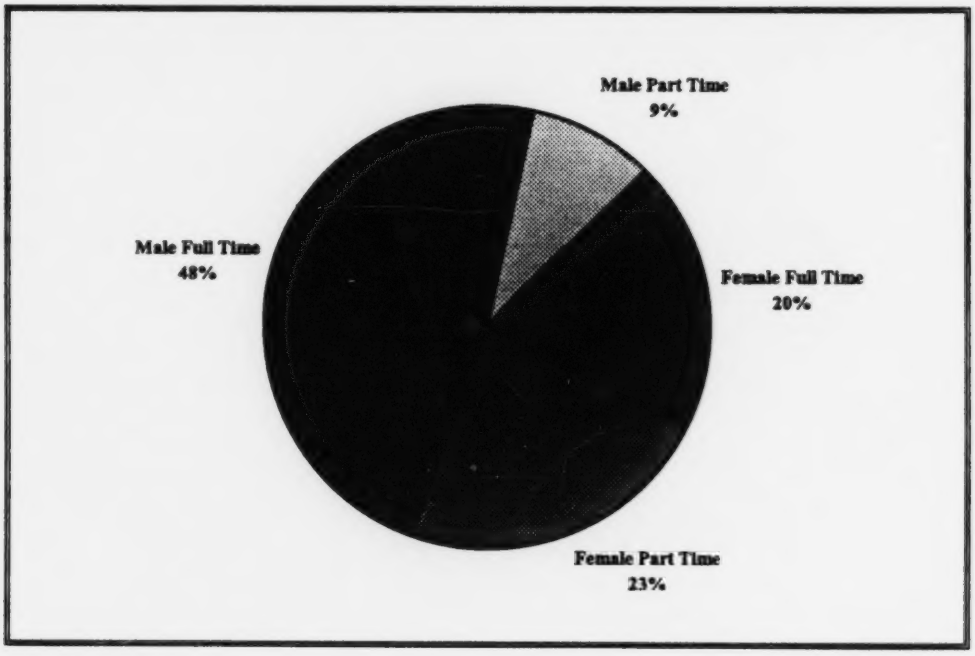
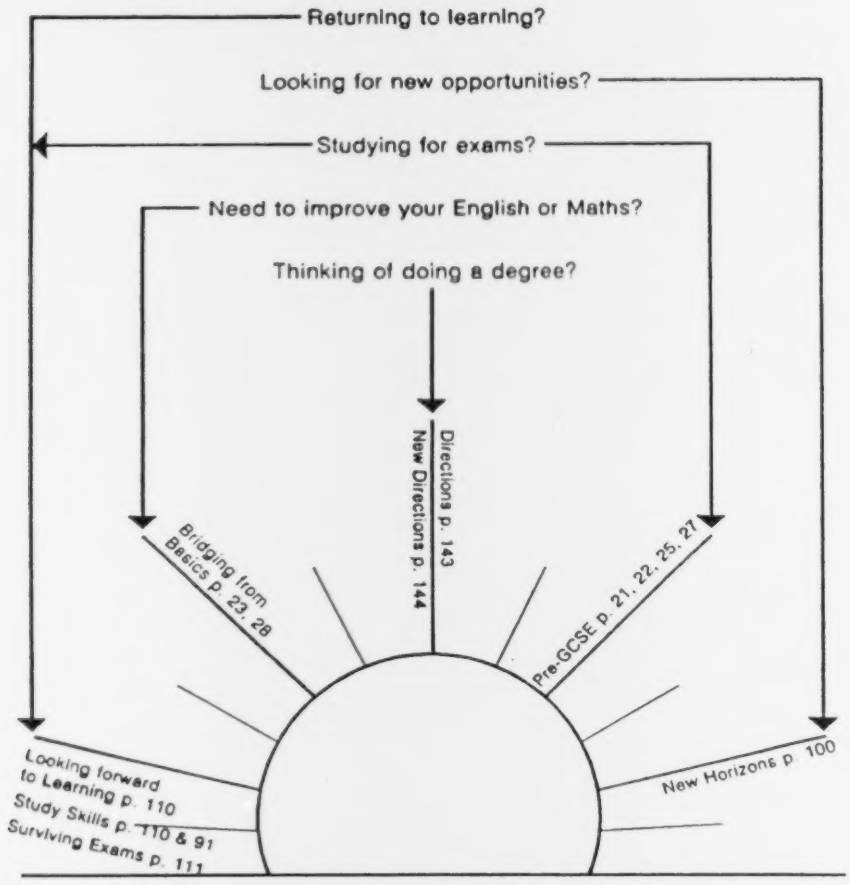


Figure 3: Progression Routes, Hastings College

Department of Adult & Community Education – A – Z

Thinking of returning to learning?


Returning to learning?
Looking for new opportunities?
Studying for exams?
Need to improve your English or Maths?
Thinking of doing a degree?
New Directions p. 143
Directions p. 144
Bridging from Basics p. 23, 28
Pre-GCSE p. 21, 22, 25, 27
Looking forward to Learning p. 110
Study Skills p. 110 & 91
Surviving Exams p. 111
New Horizons p. 100

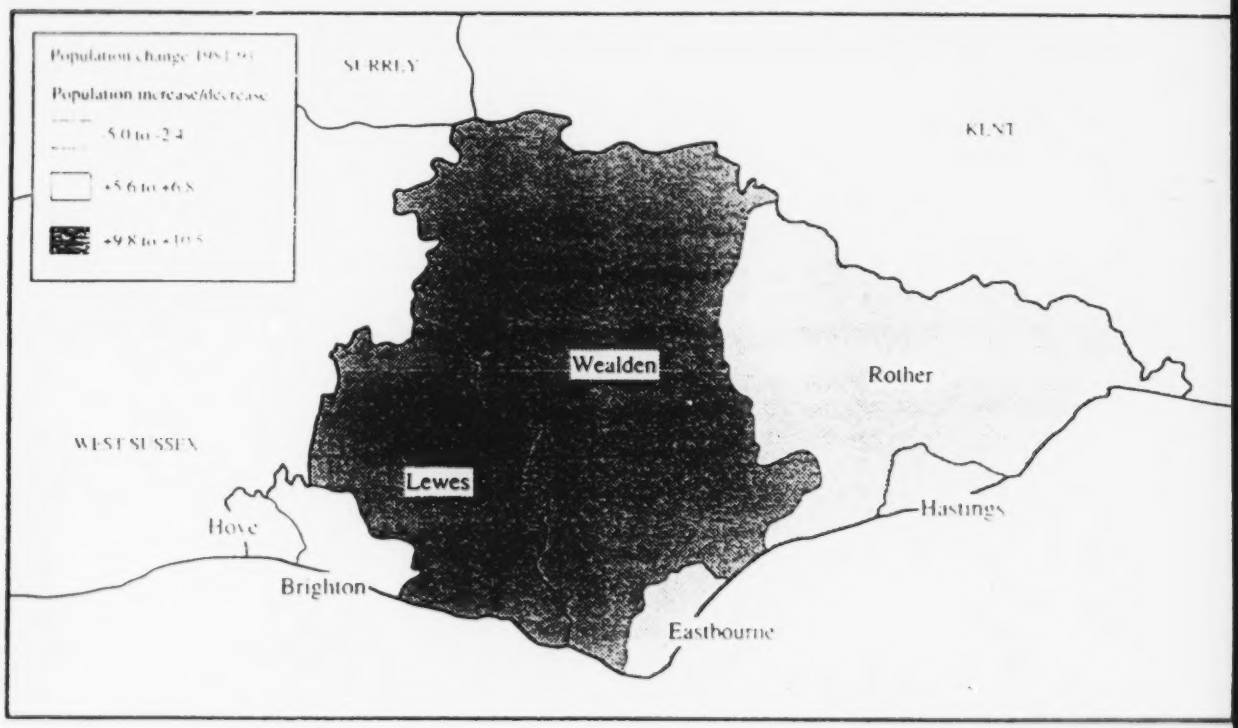
Looking for new opportunities?
Studying for exams?
Thinking about getting some qualifications?
Not sure if you need to improve your English and Maths first?
Thinking of doing a degree?
We have a wide range of one-day and weekly workshops and courses at all levels from help with brushing up basic skills to study skills for a degree. Look for the logo in the margin.

Creche facilities p.13

Source: Hastings College Part Time Prospectus 1993/94

Map 1 East Sussex: demographic trends

Percentage change in resident population (1981 population base) 1981-91: districts in East Sussex



Source: OPCS County Monitor. East Sussex 1992

Map 2 UK population projections

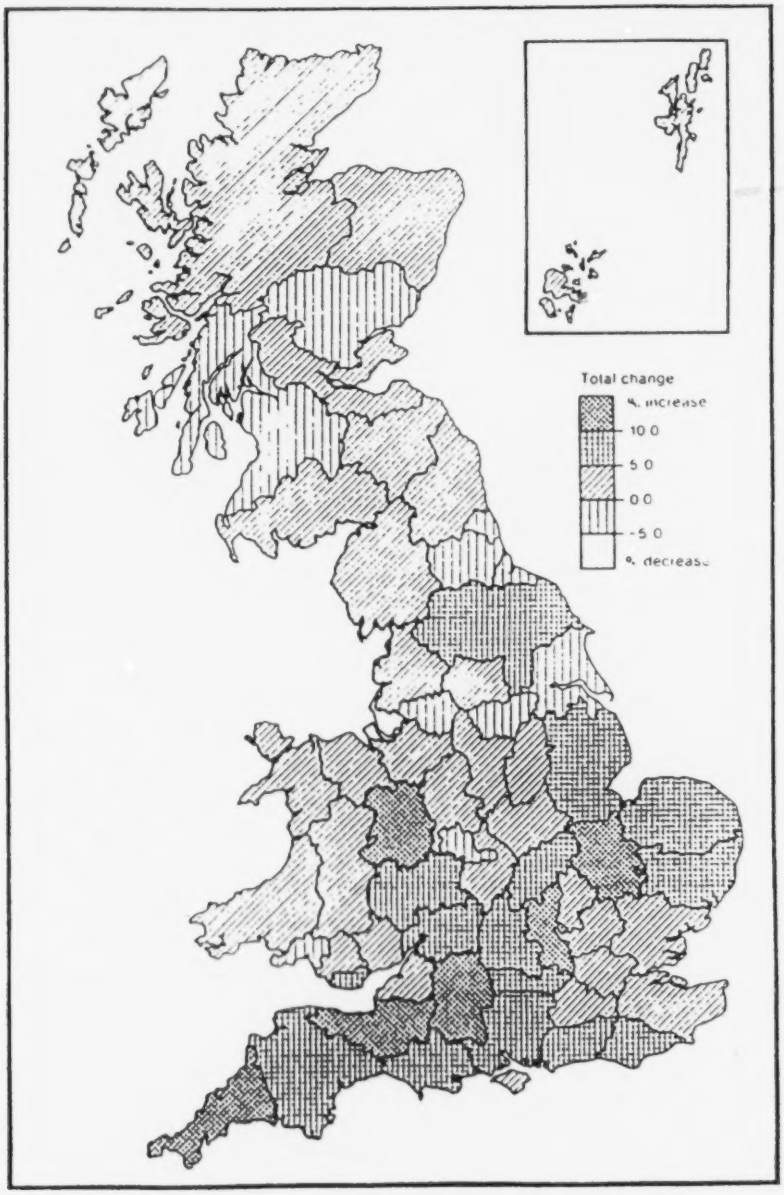


Figure 1. Projected population change, 1991-2001.

Source: Champion and Townsend (1990), Figure 12.1. Originally calculated from OPCS (1988), RGS (1989) and Welsh Office (1989).

Source: *Faith in the Countryside*

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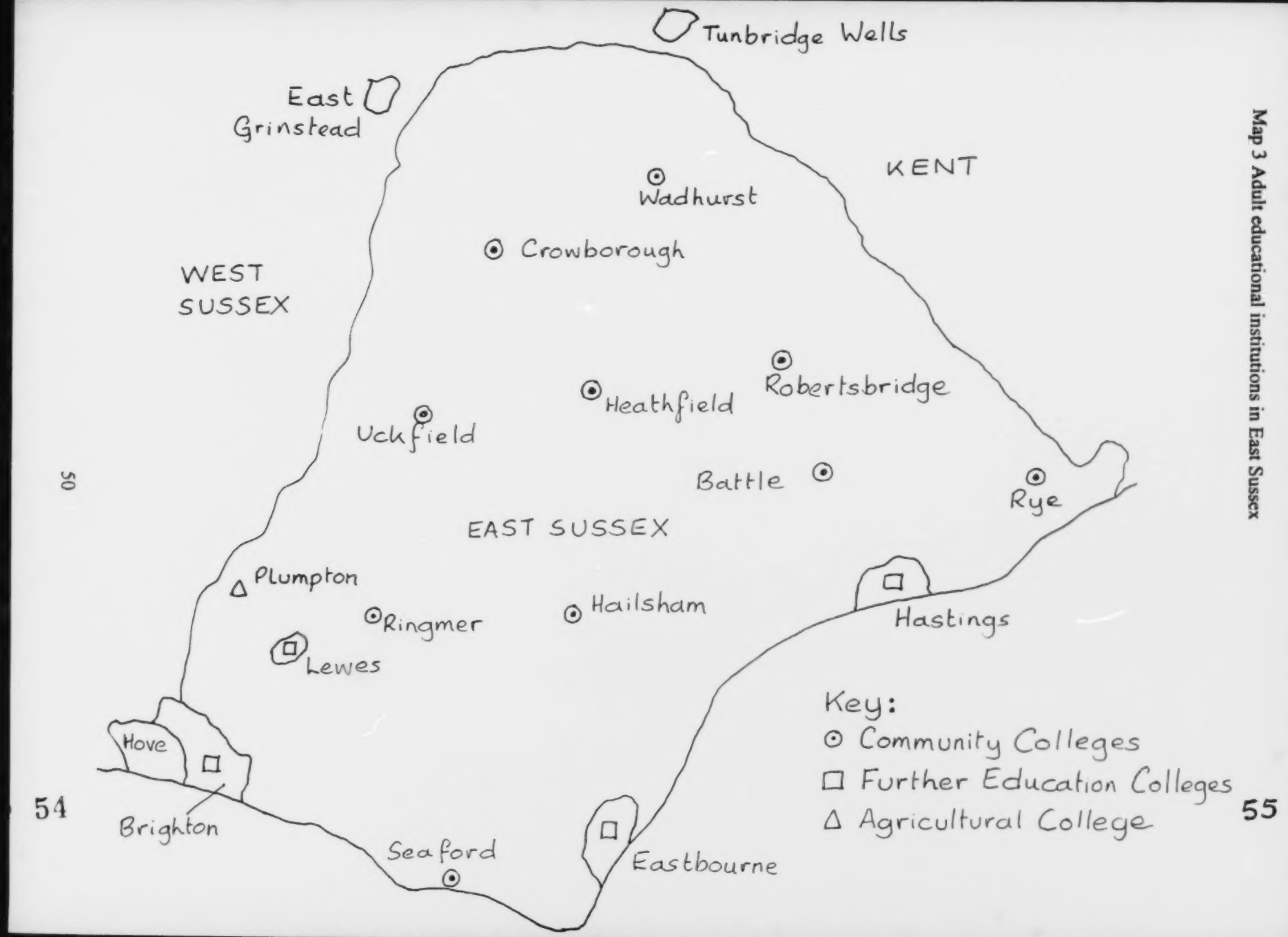
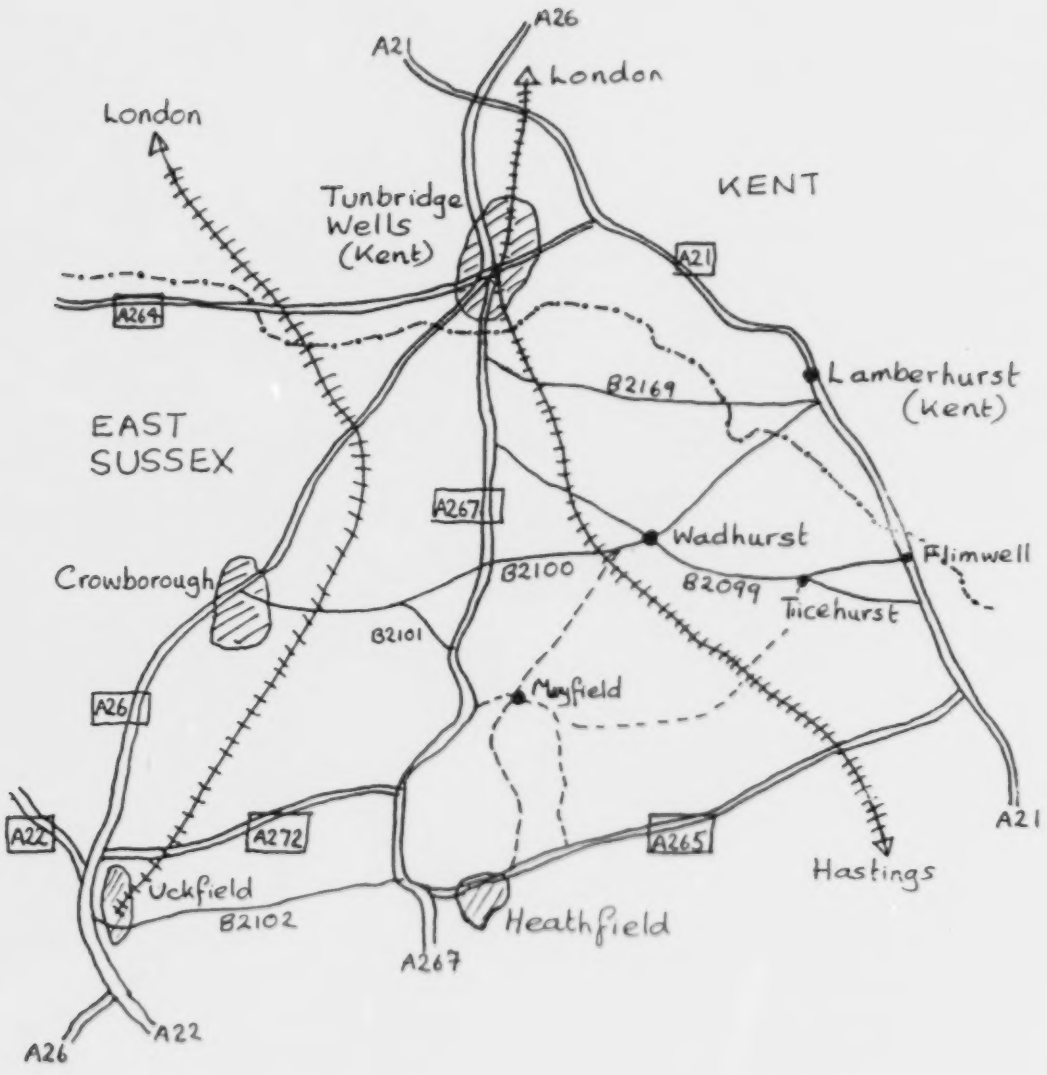


Map 3 Adult educational institutions in East Sussex

Map 4 Wealden Sussex



Key:

Major ("A") roads

Minor ("B") roads

Local roads (sample)

Railways

County boundary

Case Study 2

Derbyshire

John Payne

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1. Introduction: Characteristics of Derbyshire

Derbyshire is a complex county with a population of over 900,000. The population is increasing in two particular areas - the High Peak area and South Derbyshire/Erewash. Elsewhere small increases have been recorded, except in Derby City and in the Bolsover area, where industrial decline has not been matched by increased commuter population, as it has in the south of the county (map 1). Derbyshire includes one very large city (Derby) and the majority of the Peak District National Park, the first national park in the UK, and one of the most sparsely populated rural areas in England. The main occupations in the Peak District are agriculture, quarrying and seasonal tourism. "Rural" has different connotations in the east and south of the county, where many of the villages owe their existence to coal-mining. These areas face severe economic problems, with the exhaustion of some mines plus the government's decision to run down the coal-mining industry as an energy source. There is some commuter influence in the extreme north-east (Sheffield) and north-west (Manchester) and of course around the Derby area. In the National Park area, there is also a weekend and holiday cottage population. In addition to the declining mining and textile industries, Derbyshire has new industries such as the Toyota factory, located in a rural setting at Burnaston south-west of Derby.

A number of major railway routes skirt the area, most noticeably the Midland main-line from London to Derby, Chesterfield and Sheffield. The Sheffield-Manchester line passes through the northern part of the Peak Park (Edale). There is a branch-line connecting Buxton and the north-west corner of the county (Chapel-en-le-Frith, Whaley bridge and New Mills) with Stockport and Manchester, and a branch line from Derby to Matlock, where many of the County offices are located. However, this latter line has a timetable which does not fit in with the London-Derby trains, and through travellers can expect an average 45 minute wait at Derby. Thirty-one per cent of households have no car, an improvement of 8% compared with 1981, but still a substantial number. Twenty-four per cent of households have 2 or more cars (these figures are almost identical to East Sussex). In general the more rural areas have higher rates of car ownership than the more urban areas. For example, 22.0% in South Derbyshire and 22.9% in Derbyshire Dales have no car, compared with 35.9% in Bolsover, 36.8% in Derby and 37.7% in Chesterfield. The exception appears to be High Peak, with 28.7% having no car.

Unemployment in Derbyshire in June 1993 was slightly below the national average (10.0% against 10.6%). However, there are sharp regional variations within the county: from 12.1% in the Chesterfield Travel to Work area (TTWA) and 13.5% in the Mansfield TTWA to only 5.6% in the Matlock TTWA and 6.8% in the Burton TTWA (which includes much of the area covered by the micro-study in section 6 of this report). At the same time, and consistent with national patterns, the Derbyshire Information on Employment and Training (DIET) consortium reported skills shortages: "The largest numbers of hard-to-fill vacancies were for craft and skilled workers and plant and machine operatives, which together account for over half of the vacancies" (DCC 1993:11). Unemployment trends in South Derbyshire are considered separately in the micro-study (section 6).

Poverty is not synonymous with unemployment. A recent study of the Peak National Park concluded that there was a high proportion of traditionally low-paid jobs, a high proportion of part-time, low-paid jobs, a high proportion of pensioners dependent solely on state benefits, under registration for welfare benefits, and that "the job structure in the Peak District is rapidly exchanging full time male occupation for part time female occupation" (Peak District Rural Deprivation Forum 1993:15).

2. Methodology

As in the East Sussex case-study, the main methods employed were key respondent methodology and the collection of documentary evidence.

Primary sources included 1991 census data, up-to-date unemployment statistics from Derbyshire County Council, documentary evidence on the council's Community Education policies and a range of prospectuses and leaflets from educational providers.

Secondary sources included two student dissertations. The Peak Park Trust provided valuable information on rural poverty. There are a number of references to Derbyshire Community Education in the Adult Education literature.

Key respondents interviewed were:

> In Derbyshire Community Education service: Donald Rae, Janet White, Tim Baker, Chris Timms, Barry Northedge, Angela Harrison, Brenda Hart, Peter Tunnicliffe, Cathy Denham, Irene Stiles, Sandra Page
>
> Janet Bridgeman, South-East Derbyshire College
>
> Sean Kelly, Wilmorton Community College
>
> Helen Parke and Jill Rogers, North East Derbyshire Tertiary College, Cresswell CLOC
>
> Helen Bovey, Derbyshire Rural Community Council
>
> Simon Brooks, Warslow Telecottage (Staffordshire)
>
> Brian Hague, Etwall Well-Dressing Association
>
> Jill Vennard, Northern College (Barnsley)

In addition I was able to interview a number of students for the South Derbyshire case-study.

My base during the field-work was the Need-to-Know Centre in Swadlincote, and I would like to thank all the staff there for their kindness and hospitality - and all the cups of tea!

A more naturalistic approach?

Although superficially the methodology used in Derbyshire looks similar to that used in East Sussex, there were significant differences, most of which were due to the fact that I stayed in the area during the field-work. Thus I was able to employ more naturalistic methods of enquiry. By this I mean that interviews tended to be rather more open-ended, and often led to further activities which were not necessarily foreseen in the research plan, including informal contacts on the streets, and in pubs and shops. In doing this I was following the precept that "in the early weeks or months in the field that which is to be 'important' is the object of the discovery process not its organising principle" (Ball 1984:74). Such an approach seems entirely appropriate to a research project which sets out to extend the notion of adult learning from that

which goes on in formal educational settings to the informal adult learning which takes place in voluntary organisations and other social settings, and which seeks to set an agenda for further research on "rural" adult learning.

I was able to spend more time in the villages looking round at housing and local employment, chatting informally to people I met and charting the range of voluntary activities taking place by, for example, recording notices on village notice-boards and in shop windows. In addition to these unstructured activities, the interviews I conducted with local students gave me a clearer picture of the role of learning activities in these communities.

It is also important to record here that, with the agreement of the project Steering Group, I did not feel it necessary to account in detail for every kind of learning activity in the county. With some notable exceptions, it proved difficult to contact F.E. college staff who felt they had anything of interest to say to an outside researcher investigating barriers to participation in rural areas. Thus college work takes up less space in this case-study than in either the East Sussex or Cornwall case-studies. The same is true of WEA and Higher Education. I am conscious that nothing is said of the important role of the church and the Women's Institute in providing informal learning opportunities in rural areas, and these will be a focus of the North Yorkshire case-study.

It will be clear to the reader from the size of section 3 (LEA Community Education) and section 6 (the microstudy) that a major emphasis of this report is on LEA Community Education. No apology is required: despite cut-backs forced on the county by government policy, it is still of an enviable size compared with most shire counties, and it was a unique opportunity to record the achievements of an innovatory and well-resourced LEA service.

3. LEA Community Education in Derbyshire

Introduction

Community Education did not just "happen" in Derbyshire. It is the result of specific political, spatial, social and economic factors.

1. Derbyshire County Council is controlled by a Labour Group committed to decentralisation and active intervention in social and economic affairs.

2. Unlike areas with similar political conditions (e.g. Inner London in the 1980s), the population is irregularly scattered across the county, from large towns like Chesterfield and Derby to areas of the National Park where the sheep population vastly exceeds the human population.

3. There is a long history of active and vigorous civil society in the area, both urban and rural. "The rural" includes not only traditional agriculture areas, but a large number of mining villages with particular traditions of communal solidarity.[1]

4. Derbyshire is undergoing a major industrial restructuring, with the decline of extractive and other heavy industries and the growth of

[1] Norma Dolby's *Diary* (Dolby 1987), an account of the 1984/85 miners' strike, is an excellent account of a mining village at a point of maximum stress on its social fabric.

service sector employment, light industry and small businesses. This has obvious implications for the skills requirements of the labour force, and is likely to create social tensions as the sources of solidarity referred to in (3) above are undermined.

What are the aims of Community Education in Derbyshire?

The aims of the Community Education service in Derbyshire are set out in the policy document *Community Education in Derbyshire. A Plan for Development*, published in 1986:

> *The general aim of community education is to afford opportunities to people of all ages, whether in the statutory system or not, for growth and development as individuals and as members of communities and to encourage local people to take a responsibility for their own learning.* (DCC 1986:1)

In this general statement one can identify at once the significant strands: education as a lifelong process; the dual objectives of individual growth and community development; the notion of empowerment. At the same time as arguing for a service based in the community rather than educational institutions and in which professional educators took the role of facilitators, the document faced squarely the apparent contradiction that "it is difficult to discuss community-based education other than in terms of institutions such as schools, colleges and other centres" (idem:3), simply because that responds to both the professional and public perceptions of what an "education" service is like. The document argues that all sectors of the existing educational system (primary and secondary schools, youth service, adult education and colleges) have their own contribution to make to CE, but that at the end of the day "Community education may be provided by any institution or none" (idem:4). The document argued for Community Education Councils (CECs) to be established in each area to represent local providers, local users and the County Council itself. The CECs were seen as a major tool in enabling people to "take a responsibility for their own learning". In the event, some have proved much more successful than others in tilting the balance away from "institutional" interests in the direction of "community" interests.

More recently, an attempt has been made to up-date these proposals in *The Derbyshire Approach to Adult Community Education* (DACE).[2] This takes account of the changing legal context, including the 1988 Education Reform Act and the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act. In addition the document reflects current thinking in stressing:

- the economic importance of adults developing new skills in the context of technological change
- the greater aspirations of women in society.

Similar changes in emphasis can be detected in the section on curriculum. While repeating the equal opportunities priority areas (ABE, work with women, work with the unemployed, work with black people, work with people with disabilities), DACE also refers to "choice in provision and styles of learning", learning programmes that take account of "existing skills and abilities", accreditation and progression (DACE). However, it also re-asserts that the aims of

[2] This document is not formally referenced, and any quotations from it are followed by (DACE) in brackets. I am grateful to DCC officers for allowing me to use this source, and the reader should bear in mind that no quotation from it should be considered to represent formal County Council policy.

the curriculum are economic, social and cultural, in contrast to the more narrow stress on the economic objectives of education often found in official publications. At the same time, it reflects the reality of the new educational quasi-market in adopting some of the language of niche-marketing, in much the same way as Brook has proposed for the Further Education College sector (Brook 1993). It is a case of whether the ideological load of equal opportunities discourse can be transferred to the competing discourse of niche marketing. And in so far as niche marketing is part of an economic discourse, the question is whether the education service can bear the additional costs of dealing with the results of economic, social and educational disadvantage implicit in equal opportunities.

With this tension between equal opportunities and niche marketing in mind, and also sensing that "community" is a broad, often vague and frequently abused term, the DACE document sets out to establish the unique contribution of "Community Education" to the education of adults. It is perhaps worth quoting this at length, since it provides a template against which my own observations, both in this section and in the micro-study (section 6) may be judged:

> *In the Derbyshire Approach to Adult Community Education this focus clearly requires ACE workers to address the needs of those adults who have experienced educational disadvantage originating from their gender, racial origin, culture, socio-economic status or disability. People who have been put off by their previous experience of education may reject or be unable to access what is offered by existing institutions. It is therefore necessary for substantial face to face work to take place, in communities, in settings and in ways which do not reflect institutional values. This work could be termed pre-programme in the sense that workers join individuals and groups in their own expressed interests or identified tasks, and work alongside them without a pre-determined syllabus. Workers will take opportunities as they present themselves, to create progression routes to more organised learning opportunities or employment options or community action. The curriculum which thus evolves may contain elements such as confidence building, basic skills, group leadership skills, sociology, education for political competence, and a range of task specific skills, for instance in accessing funding, working with children, environmental issues and so on.*
>
> *The emerging needs of those not currently engaged with existing programmes can thus be identified. A further response to these needs might take the form of courses or learning experiences specifically targeted to address the issues of disadvantage, or equally, might be to ensure that existing and developing programmes in our centres take into account the particular needs of people who may be taking their first steps towards continuing education.*
>
> *This body of work is the unique contribution of Adult Community Educators in Derbyshire. As a style of work, in that it focuses on individual growth, as well as on politicising group work, it can also inform and transform the more visible curriculum of non-vocational and recreational learning opportunities. At its best it will harness and develop the hidden potential which exists in all communities for self-determination, for individual and community growth and for self esteem.* (DACE)

Village Hall Class, South Derbyshire

Village Hall Class, South Derbyshire

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What structures are in place to achieve those aims?

A major influence on the development of Community Education in Derbyshire has been the establishment of 37 Community Education Councils serving local areas of between 10,000 and 40,000 people. These perform the function of Governing Bodies in providing a framework for governance of the service. But they also provide a tool for local participation in that governance and for differentiation according to the perceived needs of different areas. They include representatives of the County Council, District Council and Parish Councils, the providers of adult education, and users and potential users (e.g. through representatives of community organisations).

Alongside this representative structure is a professional structure with 8 area organisers, administrative staff, development staff and large numbers of part-time tutors. A Senior Community Education Officer meets on a weekly basis with the area organisers to co-ordinate activities.

The two structures - representative and professional - do not always fit neatly together. There has been conflict over, for example, cuts in the service. People giving of their time on a voluntary basis find it difficult to accept not only that it is not possible to meet new needs which they are identifying, but that useful existing work had had to be cut. The willingness of CECs to by-pass the professional structure and take complaints direct to County Councillors and to the Chief Education Officer have led to such comments to CE organisers as "Can't you control your CEC better?" Reductions in staff numbers mean more pressure on remaining workers and therefore less time and energy to service the CECs.

There have also been pressures coming from changes in the legal and funding arrangements for education. For example, schools have greater powers than they used to have, with Local Management of Schools (LMS) and the potential to opt out of the LEA altogether - Grant Maintained Status (GMS). Thus where the 1986 Development Plan placed great emphasis on the use of school facilities, DACE uses the term Adult Community Education to imply a more independent status for the adult education work within Community Education. Increasingly, funding for adult education comes from outside the local authority: Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) for Schedule 2 (vocational and academic) work; European Social Fund (ESF) and Rural Development Commission (RDC) for development work; Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs) for job-related courses; Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit (ALBSU) for literacy, numeracy and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) development. The structure of CECs is currently under review: it is a question of how to match the principles of democratic accountability with an increasingly centralised and non-accountable funding regime.

What activities that promote adult learning take place in Community Education?

Three main forms of activity can be identified:

1. A traditional adult education curriculum, as outlined in the East Sussex case-study. This includes leisure, culture and recreational courses, and some academic courses.

2. Developmental work. This includes Adult Basic Education, work with community groups, Return to Learn courses, work in conjunction with other agencies (e.g. health visitors, social workers, welfare rights workers), Educational Guidance[3].

3. Specialist projects, e.g.

   - ALBSU Skills at Work project (see microstudy, section 6)
   - Need-to-Know Centre and bus (see microstudy, section 6)
   - The Coalfields bus (see section 4.4)

What are the current pressures on the service and its future prospects?

These current financial pressures on CE have specific implications in the more rural areas of the county, where the economics of adult education are always going to rest on a knife-edge. One area organiser told me of one example where CE had withdrawn from a particular village school because of the charges levied under LMS. In the same area provision has become more centred on the local market town, with village classes closed. Local WIs have used some of the tutors who have lost classes to put on their own classes in some villages. So the process which was observed in East Sussex of a progressive withdrawal from village provision is also beginning to happen in Derbyshire. While this has to be set against increasing levels of car ownership, it has also to be set against decreasing public transport services, with the result that the most deprived rural inhabitants are being decreasingly well served by the CE service. One CE organiser explained that the job was increasingly desk-bound, juggling courses that might achieve high enrolments against smaller groups with a clear social purpose. The outreach work (examples given in this conversation were Mothers-and-Toddlers groups and involvement with Health Visitors and Social Workers) was not getting done. At the same time, the attempt to keep "all the balls in the air" was causing stress among staff.

It is clear that what is at stake as a result of financial pressures varies between the three areas outlined in the previous section. In the case of the traditional adult education work, there will be loss of quality of life, especially for people in more rural areas where the economies of scale are difficult to achieve. The developmental work is most at risk, in that it often consists of small groups, it characteristically involves outreach work, which is expensive in terms of staff time, and, because it often consists of very informal and tentative contacts, it is harder to define outcomes and therefore justify expenditure. Specialist projects are, ironically, in a better position because they depend largely on external funding. Some at least of this comes from the European Social Fund, and is therefore less subject to the ideological intransigence of the UK government.

In the final months of 1993 there was a real sense of crisis in the air in Derbyshire CE. In November, NATFHE (the union which organises further and adult education teachers) held a day conference to discuss the issue. Discussion was based around a draft paper on "The future

[3] There is no county-wide structure for Educational Guidance. Responsibility is shared between CE and the Careers Service. The advantages of a county-wide Educational Guidance scheme will be stressed in the Cornwall case-study.

of Community Education in Derbyshire", which I was allowed to see a draft copy of.[4] This makes out the case for CE, citing its popular support, its national reputation, and the particular strengths of the service. Issues of local democracy and accountability are stressed: "Community education is deeply rooted, locally accountable through Community Education Councils, and remains part of a democratically controlled local education authority." (NATFHE)

It is not yet clear how the local government spending plans for 1994/95 and beyond will affect Derbyshire, though it is one of the authorities that is likely to benefit from the shift of resources from Inner City areas to shire counties. A further consideration in Derbyshire is the impact of possible local government reform. To say this is controversial in Derbyshire would be an understatement, and the first two sets of proposals by the Local Government Commission have already been abandoned. There are three issues of concern to CE staff here: (1) the breaking up of existing teams and colleague relationships; (2) the possible creation of authorities which would be politically antipathetic to the aims of CE; (3) the creation of authorities which might place budgetary restraint before the provision of public services.

4. Other Providers of Formal Adult Learning in Derbyshire

4.1 Further Education Colleges

In the context of incorporation of colleges as a result of the 1992 FHE Act, there is now no LEA work being carried out in Derbyshire colleges. However, this is not to say that there is no overlap between the two sets of provision. For example, Chesterfield College offers a number of classes in Sign Language, as well as three groups for hearing impaired people. They also offer a range of GCSE and "A" level classes in the evenings, with 20 separate subjects at "A" level. A brief glance at Map 2 will show that Derbyshire colleges are not spread evenly through the County, and indeed are typically placed relatively close to county boundaries. Further, one college in Staffordshire - Burton-upon-Trent College - is regularly used by South Derbyshire adults. The implications of this overlap of provision are not straightforward. On the one hand the potential student is offered choice between CE provision and college provision. On the other hand, college provision will tend to "cream off" adults who are able to travel, thus affecting the viability of locally based courses which are especially valuable for those unable or unwilling (e.g. because of fear of being out alone at night) to travel.

Colleges are also more likely to be used by those people who can seek out education for themselves, rather than those who might respond to a more low-key approach through outreach work in local neighbourhoods. There was little evidence that colleges in Derbyshire were actively engaged in rural outreach work, with one significant exception which I shall come to in section 4.4.

Wilmorton College was involved in active outreach work on peripheral estates in Derby City, with attempts made to put on courses which are more local to where people live. Some outreach work has been done in Swadlincote in the extreme south of the county (see microstudy in section 6) and in the Ripley area (which is in fact closer to Ilkeston and Heanor than to Derby). Wilmorton is an associate college of De Montfort University, for degree, HND, teacher training and access courses. There are nursery and playgroup facilities on site. As at Chesterfield, GCSE/A levels and courses for the hearing impaired and those who work with them are areas of overlap with CE provision, with some additional provision of language

[4] This is a draft paper, and references in the text are followed by (NATFHE) in brackets. Such quotations should not, however, be taken to be NATFHE policy.

courses for beginners. However, just as was noted in relation to "adults in the 6th form" in the East Sussex case-study, daytime provision is scarcely adult friendly, with attendance required on 3 separate days for each subject. The well-printed stiff cover in which information was sent to me opens out into a poster, with the "W" of Wilmorton set alongside its use in "WOW!". Illustrations are of handsome, healthy young people, with young women outnumbering young men by 12 to 3. No doubt charges of sexism would be countered by pointing out that the three men are associated with printed material on "Caring", "Performance Arts" and "Office Technology", while three of the women are linked to "Construction" and "Information Technology".

The only college that provided full details of its courses and which marks a departure from the pattern presented above was South-East Derbyshire College. While its "Adult Opportunities" brochure compared badly with the glossy publications on full-time courses and for employers, it is a clearly laid out document without frills which compares well with the kind of publicity I saw from the CE sector. It sets out clearly the role of the college for adults:

> *Many people still think colleges are just for school leavers. At South East Derbyshire College nothing could be further from the truth! Last year we had 3650 students over the age of 19 coming to our centres at Alfreton, Heanor, Ilkeston and Long Eaton studying everything from computing to construction, welding to word processing and sociology to sign language. We want you to use your local community College.*

Access work with adults operates from an "adult base", two dedicated rooms at the Ilkeston Road site in Heanor, where a nursery (no creche) is provided, while outreach work is at any suitable premises in the chosen town or village. Access to education, training and work courses (10 in all) are run at Swanwick, Cotmanhay, Heanor, Ilkeston and Long Eaton, variously in the morning, afternoon and evening. The provision is described as " ... a very informal course for people who may have been out of the job market for a while, or have been bringing up a family or simply feel like a new start in their lives. You can choose to study a wide range of topics in a friendly and relaxed environment. You can choose from: English, Typing, Computing, Maths and Word-Processing." These courses are free, through ESF funding attached to work with long-term unemployed and women returners. Initially most students were women, but as the recession has deepened, the number of men has increased, although women still predominate. There are a variety of progression routes, with a high percentage going on to some form of education. 8-week taster courses are run three times a year in subjects such as Information Technology and English. Further progression might be into the Higher Education access course. Some go into work, though for women this often means part-time low-paid work, or join VET courses in other parts of the college. The main problems with these courses would seem to be:

1. The lack of a clear link to job creation strategies
2. The lack of child-care, especially for women from outlying villages
3. Insufficient resources for the time-consuming business of outreach - in job centres, pubs, housing estates and so on.

Relations with local Community Education staff are said to be good, with some shared use of premises. There is also some basic education provision in Ilkeston, which is also free, and a section on "leisure" courses which include some of the courses most frequently found in adult

education (Flower-Arranging, Car Maintenance, Cake Decoration). Fee levels were comparable to the Community Education service.

In the post-incorporation period, there was concern expressed by CE staff about the future of relations with the colleges. One college was singled out as having co-operated in the past over identifying and meeting need, but even here there was a sense that relations were shifting to an emphasis on "Whose students are they?" CE workers criticised college workers for trying to do outreach without really understanding the concept, and of adopting an approach known as "parachuting". By this they meant arriving in the middle of a local community without preparatory work and immediately talking about educational courses rather than the more gradualist approach preferred by CE workers. In so far as CE workers felt themselves to be competing in a market, they saw their uniqueness in terms of being low-key and user-friendly with easy-to-talk-to staff and child-care. At the same time, criticism such as that colleges were "pinching our good ideas" seemed to ignore the fact that colleges do need to do outreach work, think about transport difficulties and putting on courses off-site if they are to make their valuable and often specialist resources available to a larger proportion of the adult population.

As mentioned above, Burton-upon-Trent College, because of its location (map 2) does serve Derbyshire adults. A number of courses specifically for adults are included in their prospectus. These include access to Higher Education courses, but also more directly vocation courses such as "Women into Hairdressing" with an NVQ2 accreditation or "Women into Information Technology". From 94/95 a number of the higher education access courses will be collapsed into a "Modular foundation/access programme" in conjunction with the University of Derby, and, significantly, a 10.00-3.15 timetable.

[The work of the North Derbyshire Tertiary College at Clowne is dealt with in section 4.4, the North Derbyshire Coalfield Project.]

4.2 Higher education

There is close collaboration in Derbyshire between the WEA and the University of Nottingham Department of Extra-Mural Studies. The centre for a lot of this work is Tawney House in Matlock. The building is owned by Derbyshire County Council (DCC) and run as an educational trust, funded by the University and the WEA.

A more recent development in Matlock relates to an old mill owned by the Arkwright Society. The Society wants to develop this as an educational centre and have invited the new University of Derby to organise educational activities. While the university has accepted this invitation in principle, there is currently no budget for this work. It remains to be seen whether this will deliver positive outcomes, given the limited market for these courses in the town and surrounding rural area. As one LEA employee commented in relation to this development: "Rural areas need co-operation not competition between educational institutions."

In general terms, the University/WEA courses are in the mainstream of such provision, as outlined in the East Sussex report. For example, the Swadlincote branch runs two courses:

1. "Derbyshire transformed", which is about the impact of the Industrial Revolution on the county,
2. "Archaeology in the landscape", with specific reference to the Swadlincote area.

However, two developments by the WEA are worthy of note:

1. "Studying literature: an introduction". This is a correspondence teaching course which provides study units centred on short stories from *The Penguin Book of English Short Stories*. The course can be studied at any time and at any pace, and there are optional Saturday tutorials in support of the course held in Manchester.

2. "Make your experience count." This is sub-titled "A new course aimed at women who are thinking about making changes to their lives". It is aimed at women returners and a creche is provided. This course is run jointly by the WEA and DCC, with funding from the European Social Fund. It would be interesting to evaluate whether this course has been more successful in attracting rural women than the equivalent BT-funded WEA courses in East Sussex. These have been successful in urban areas, but with one exception, less successful in rural areas.

4.3 Learning at work: the Derbyshire Employee Development Initiative (DEDI)

This is of particular interest, as Derbyshire is the site of a two-year innovative project (1992-94) to promote personal development and learning opportunities for employees in the county. This is a joint initiative between Northern College and DCC, with additional TEC funding.[5] Its mission statement reads:

> *The principal objective of DEDI is to encourage and support personal development and learning opportunities for employees located in the county of Derbyshire through a partnership between education and training providers, trade unions, employers and Training and Enterprise Councils.*

Employee development here is a term which can encompass Vocational Education and Training (VET) but which sees employees benefiting from wider opportunities to continue their general education. It involves an analysis of changing working methods which make increasing demands on employees. It is of particular benefit to those employees who have benefited least from initial education and training (Payne 1993). This "return to learn" focus is explicit in DEDI:

> *The central purposes of DEDI are to provide frameworks which enable employees to gain access to broad educational opportunities and return to learning. DEDI operates in parallel with job related training and is not intended as a substitute for the normal training arrangements which organisations need to make, however, evidence indicates that where employee development programmes are established they enhance, complement and extend training provision.* (DEDI "Background and general information" leaflet, reproduced in full as appendix 1 of this report).

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[5] Northern College plays an important role in providing learning opportunities for adults in Derbyshire. This role is further discussed in the South Derbyshire micro-study, section 6 of the present report..

Indeed, the DEDI staff claim that all their interviews with employees have revealed a desire for a core, work-based curriculum involving:

- *return to study, learning to learn and confidence building programmes;*
- *work on numeracy and literacy skills at all levels of ability;*
- *improving understanding and capabilities in new technologies;*
- *team building and communication skills, including the use of the outdoors;*
- *health related and leisure activities;*
- *foreign languages, particulary French, Spanish and German*

However, at this point in time it is probably too early to evaluate the success or otherwise of the Derbyshire initiative in linking employer initiatives to TEC strategies and to LEA provision. DEDI is currently being evaluated externally, itself an important move as there has been very little external evaluation of even well-known schemes such as the Ford UK Employee Development and Assistance Programme (EDAP), which has involved 40% of the Ford workforce. It is also too early to say what, if any, effect DEDI has had in firms in rural locations or which recruit staff living in rural areas. My own view is that such LEA initiatives are of particular significance in offering external support and expertise to smaller firms (SMEs) which are the vast majority of the total employers, and which employ the majority of people in rural areas.

A further local initiative, the ALBSU funded Basic Skills at Work project at the Nestle factory in Hatton, which has not involved DEDI, is referred to in the microstudy, section 6.

4.4 North Derbyshire Coalfield Project

The area of the county around Bolsover is a scene of industrial dereliction. A century ago, this was an agricultural area. Then came coal:

> *New villages and communities were created by coal, for coal. The subsequent decline, and the absence of a broad economic activity base, has resulted in rural communities whose historical and cultural tradition is focused around an industry that is no longer there.* (Eames 1993:93)

Unlike the south of the county, where the run-down of the coal-mining industry had its main impact a decade ago, this is an area where the majority of closures have taken place in the last few years. As I indicated in section 1 (Introduction), the unemployment rate is among the highest in the county, and car ownership among the lowest. Because of the dominance of the coal-mining industry, the level of transferable skills among the population tends to be relatively low, and the job-specific skills of coal-miners are likely to have little use outside of the pits. It is not a rural area in the traditional sense, but with the run-down of the mining industry is acquiring many of the problematic features of "the rural": isolation, poor communications, poverty, low levels of education and skills, and limited job opportunities.

With the collapse of the local economy, a number of agencies have moved into the area in recent years. Thus, there are some positive aspects to the situation:

1. The existence of the Tertiary College at Clowne in the north of the area, and its associated CLOCs

2. The existence of a well-organised network of working-class organisations, including trade unions, trades councils, working-men's clubs, and Women's Groups (many of which had their origins in the 84/85 miners strike) (see also Dolby 1987)

3. The Mobile Project.

Community Learning Opportunities Centre (CLOCs)

Eames (1993) covers the setting-up of the first of the CLOC centres at Whaley Thorns in some detail. Whaley Thorns is an ex-pit village 3 miles from Shirebrook with a population of 1,395. The original community initiatives worker was funded by the N.E.Derbyshire Tertiary College and the Church Urban Fund.[6] Activities included such classic community development initiatives as a local newsletter, a community centre in the redundant local school and a community cafe in the same location. Community learning developed in the village in a gradual way and with strong local involvement. Eames describes it as a "community-led multi-agency initiative (with) a steering group with over 60 per cent representation of local users." (Eames 1993:102).

The Tertiary College now supports CLOCs at Clay Cross, Clowne, Creswell, Eckington, Shirebrook and Whaley Thorns. They offer "help with retraining, job search, CVs, English, Maths, Word-Processing, reading and writing, entrance tests, GCSEs." This includes courses such as the "Breakthrough" courses which are designed as a tentative starting-point for people who want to return to study. In addition to the work at the CLOCS, an Adult Education programme is run throughout the area, including schools, community centres, church halls.

What is not entirely apparent from information provided is the extent of co-operation and/or competition between the Tertiary College, now incorporated and independent of the County Council, and the Community Education service, and whether this is working to the benefit or detriment of local people seeking learning opportunities. While the mobile project referred to in the next section is clearly complimentary to the CLOCs, it is not immediately clear what the advantages are of having two sets of provision in some of the larger villages in the area where both CLOCs and Community Education operate. It was also worrying to find that the admirable North Derbyshire Community Information booklet, published by the College, and funded by the college and the RDC, offers only the addresses and phone numbers of the 4 Community Education Councils in the area.

It should be noted that the North-East Derbyshire Tertiary College covers a range of learning opportunities from Basic Education to degree level work. There are Return to Study, pre-Access and Access to Sheffield University courses run at the Markland Campus in Clowne.

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[6] This appointment was influenced by publication of the Church of England report *Faith in the City* in 1985. The identification of the problems of a mining village as "urban" in nature emphasises the rather "leaky" use of the word "rural"!

The mobile project

This is funded jointly by the ESF, DCC and RDC. There is additional funding from specific agencies for specific work, e.g. from the TEC for "Return to Work" activities, from the Benefits Agency for work related to the Child Support Act, from Social Services to look at take-up of benefits entitlement. It operates as part of the Community Education service.

The mobile element is a converted double-decker bus, with computer stations on both decks, an area that can be used for child-care, disability access to the lower deck, and a small private area at the head of the stairs which can be used for interviews and private discussions. The aim of the Mobile Project is to bring Community Education services to small rural communities which do not currently have access to CE facilities. To this end, the main facilities offered by the bus are:

- Information services, available both on computer and through leaflets and discussion. These include Benefits Agency, Social Services and Welfare Advice, Careers Service, Training and Access Points (TAPs), the rest of the Community Education service and other educational providers such as the CLOCs, the Derbyshire Centre for Integrated Living and the North Derbyshire TEC. For all of these, the bus can act as the first point of contact for people in the villages. Specialists from the Careers Service or Social Services (welfare benefits) can be brought on the bus for specific tasks, and there is a phone for direct contact with other agencies. This strong emphasis on information services reflects the view of the Peak Park Trust that the provision of information services to economically deprived people is a priority (Scott et al 1991:72)

- Educational guidance and careers guidance

- Courses in subjects such as Information Technology, Sociology and Return to Work. Accreditation is provided through the North East Midlands Access Partnership and progression to other forms of provision is encouraged.

At the same time, this probably gives too tidy a view of the work of the Mobile Project. In late 1993, the bus was in use for 10 sessions a week, and it was hoped to increase this to 12-14 sessions in 1994. For example, a day's work might include a morning computer class, vocational and educational guidance for a rural Adult Basic Education group in the afternoon, and work with young people in a village in the evening, on topics such as drugs and H.I.V. A further bus has been purchased for conversion, using EU funds.

Summary

What is not clear is what will replace mining as the main economic activity in the area. As the supervisor of the Mobile Project said to me: "There's nothing coming in to fill the void of the pits at the moment. It's still too new." (1993 interview). Redundancy payments represent "more money than they'll ever see again in their lives". His own view was that the crunch would come after Easter 1994 when redundancy money begins to run out, and ex-miners are faced with harsh decisions about their future. In this situation, the Coalfield Project represents both a process of facing up to the present and an optimistic view of the future. By undertaking training, people can put themselves in line for jobs that may appear in the future, and an

upskilling of the labour force makes it more likely that inward investment will come into the area. At the same time, there is no clear strategy for job creation in the area. This in turn is likely to prejudice the success of this innovatory and exciting project.
Clearly there is a long-term research need to study the success or otherwise of training and education interventions in this area. For example, has the relatively rapid response by the Tertiary College and the Community Education service in the 90s made a significance difference compared with the rather slower response in South Derbyshire in the 80s? There are also broad social issues which interface with education and training issues. One relates to gender relations. Since the 84/85 miners' strike, women have become more active at all levels in the community, including the political, and have greater aspirations for their own lives. At the same time, many men are struggling to come to terms with the breakdown of long-standing social, political and cultural networks which went with the coal-mining industry. At a political level, there are questions around the remodelling of the Labour Party, and also the challenge to Labour hegemony represented by fascist groups (e.g. BNP branches) in the villages of both north-east Derbyshire and north-west Nottinghamshire.

4.5 Telecottages

The Telecottage movement, which links developments in Information Technology with training needs and community and economic development in rural areas, is of national significance, and is referred to at this point in the Derbyshire study because it was through contacts in the Derbyshire Community Education service that I made contact with Britain's first telecottage, set up in 1989: the Moorlands Telecottage at Manifold Primary School, Warslow. This is within the Peak District National Park, although located across the county boundary in Staffordshire. Further, as I shall show in this section, there are organic links between Moorlands Telecottage and the Community Education service in Derbyshire.

Teleworking, which originated in Scandinavia, refers to work done on a full- or part-time basis, linked electronically with a distant office. In that sense it may be seen as an alternative to commuting. The work may be done from home, or from a regional centre known as a telecottage. The types of work done (word-processing, computer-aided design etc) mean that it is most suited to those with good VET qualifications, which raises the social issue of how it can be said to relate to "rurality". It enables well qualified people to live and work in rural areas as incomers, but does it contribute to the job opportunities for existing rural dwellers?

The significance of the Moorlands Telecottage, which is run by the Staffordshire Community Education service with main funding from the LEA and RDC, is that it addresses these social issues. This in turn points to the strength of the Community Education model as developed in Derbyshire and adapted in Staffordshire. The Staffordshire model consists of 6 strands: Adult Education, Youth Provision, Advice and Information, Community Access to LEA resources, Community Development and Curriculum Enhancement (i.e. within the school system). This model can then be applied to any local project. Moorlands telecottage grew out of the Manifold villages CE project (figure 1), based on 6 villages and 4 primary schools. There is a Community Education Council of some 30 people, representing local, statutory and voluntary organisations, the local schools and the parish councils, based explicitly on the Derbyshire model. The Moorlands Telecottage is thus placed in a very clear context, in which exactly the same CE model is applied to its work (figure 2). As the co-ordinator of the telecottage put it: "If it doesn't fit, we don't do it" (1993 interview). The result, I would argue, is a very coherent operation in which "community" is seen as a concrete outcome rather than an idealised setting.

Provision at the Telecottage takes three forms:

Community development work

This is achieved through making I.T. resources available to local community groups to support their activities. On the Friday afternoon of my visit, the main user was the editor of a local community newsletter. These services are provided free. Typical users are Parish Councils and playgroups. In this sense the term "community" refers to the quality of life of people living by choice or necessity in remote rural areas. Moorlands also acts as a point of information exchange and face-to-face contact for people whose initial "community" identification may be with different localities in the area.

Education and training

Training is available on an Open Learning basis or through taught courses. This enables students to use Telecottage resources for community use, for teleworking, or to improve their employment prospects elsewhere. Some very specific courses are run by the Telecottage itself for local groups (e.g. Desk-Top Publishing for playgroups. Word-Processing for parish clerks) at nominal fees, and others as part of the LEA Adult Education provision (93/94 fees are £22 for a 10-week, 2 hours a week course).

A specific vocational qualification in teleworking (currently validated by City and Guilds, but which is expected to eventually become part of the NVQ framework) has been developed with a local college, the Telecottage Association and Staffordshire TEC, with EU funding. This provides full-time courses as part of the EU's Teleworking for Europe initiative. A sister project, Telelink Training for Europe, is developing and piloting vocational qualifications for the supervisors of teleworkers and the managers of telecottages. These are at the equivalent of NVQ levels 3 and 4.

Problems of access are dealt with in a number of ways. In a rural area such as this, public transport is very poor, and most people have some sort of access to their own transport. They can thus fit in courses when the household car is not being used by another person, for example in the evening when the partner returns from work. Lift-sharing is common, and there is a Dial-a-Ride bus service. School buses can be used to and from daytime classes, and there is an evening bus service on Mondays, when I.T. courses run in parallel with other adult education and youth service provision. Monday morning classes are timed to fit in with the playgroup at the school.

Local economic development

Self-employed people and local businesses can use a wide range of services at reasonable charges: computer hardware, fax, photocopying and office services (word-processing etc). Most of the services are provided by local people who've trained at the Telecottage, thus creating part-time work. Several people from the full-time teleworking course are now self-employed locally and use the facilities. It is also clear that while some people are thus enabled to create work for themselves, the existence of a skilled workforce in the area is likely to attract other small employers to the areas, and there is thus a job creation strategy embedded in the process.

Examples given of the kind of people using services included:

- A local publican doing his accounts and printing menus and advertising material
- A Graphics worker producing camera-ready art-work
- A forestry business using secretarial services

With a population of 2,800 within 4 miles, and 6,500 within 8 miles radius, there is sufficient work to sustain the Telecottage at its current level, though the co-ordinator saw that the generation of further income (e.g. by renting out office space as a direct alternative to commuting) would release him to play a more strategic role in the development of the work.

Telecottages are linked in the Telecottage Association. The Association's prospectus describes its aims as:

> *To improve the opportunities and choice in employment, training and services for people living in rural areas and the development of local economies through the use of information technology and telecommunications, including shared facilities in local centres.*

At the same time, it should not be assumed that every telecottage is the same. It is helpful to contrast the Moorlands telecottage with the Eccles House Telebusiness Centre (sometimes referred to as the Hope Telecottage) at Hope in the north-western part of Derbyshire. This is managed for the Peak Park Trust by a private firm:

	Moorlands	**Eccles House**
6 month ESF/RDC/TEC courses in teleworking	Yes	Yes
Cost of own courses	Nominal	Business rates
Open Learning tuition	Yes	No
Business services	Yes	Yes (but more sophisticated)
Community groups facilities	Free	Charged
I.T. training courses	CE	No (but run by Derby's CE. one mile away)

The Eccles House Telebusiness Centre does represent some of the contradictions and difficulties of the concept of telecottages, especially when applied to the outer commuter belt of a large city (Manchester). There have been some difficulties in relation to the 6-month TEC/RDC/ESF courses in I.T. and self-employment aimed at the long-term unemployed, working-class people and women returners. Staff admitted that the first cohort had produced "the wrong group" with 12 well-qualified women who had had previous careers and now

wanted to return to work. This led to a re-thinking of the leaflets advertising the course, emphasising people on low income without qualifications, to be distributed via shops and referrals from other agencies. Transport is provided for these courses, and although there is no creche, child-care can be paid for.

Telecottages, then, cannot be evaluated in a "technicist" way as means of bringing learning opportunities to rural areas. It is necessary to fit them into wider strategies which acknowledge the diverse and stratified nature of rural life in Britain today. In particular, the spatial economic filter of high house prices needs to be acknowledged:

> *"It dictates very clearly the type of people that can live in rural areas. In about 88/89* [when he first came to the Peak District] ... *property prices were still high in the South-East, and as a result people were retiring into the Peak District, because it was an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Since the property crash, the retiring individuals can no longer afford to live here, so the only people that can now afford to live here are people with strong local connections that inherit - or professionals. And there's been an increasing number of families moving into the area, where people are middle to senior management professionals with young families. And very often both partners are pretty well educated, and they make certain demands locally, they expect certain things to be available, and they want to become involved ..."* (Telecottage co-ordinator, 1993 interview)

Although these incomers are new to the area and usually have higher educational qualifications than local people,

> *"... they've got a very strong commitment to the local community, they want the schools to be successful, they want activities and opportunities locally, they like the idea of there being a Telecottage around, they like the fact that there's a community education project and various opportunities that they can get at on a local basis."* (idem)

At the same time, by careful marketing and targeting, the co-ordinator felt the telecottage had achieved a balance between incomers and "locals", which he contrasted very strongly with his own home county of Devon, where he felt incoming retirees had "hi-jacked" local communities. For example, on the full-time courses, a majority in each case had been "indigenous" people. Apart from the strength given by the clear Community Education framework, the project had also benefited from the findings of the Peak Park Rural Deprivation Project, which has charted the tensions between indigenous, commuter and retirement communities in the Peak Park, and how this is reflected in issues such as housing, planning and jobs. (Scott et al 1991). The telecottage co-ordinator is now a member of a broader grouping - the Peak Park Rural Deprivation Forum - which is seeking to take forward some of the recommendations of the Rural Deprivation project.

The final point I would like to make in this section is that the concern for local economic development as an integral part of community development does offer a template against which to measure some of the Community Education work in other parts of Derbyshire:

> *"If you're looking at community development, if you just address the social issue then you're missing the mark. You've really got to begin to address the economic side as well. And I feel that unless projects really*

take this on board, then they're really only going less than half-way there. Some of the work we do with vocational training is about people locally growing skills, making changes within their lives which have an impact on their economic situation, which directly has an impact on the quality of life locally." (idem)

5. Village Life and Informal Adult Learning

5.1 Derbyshire Rural Community Council

As I indicated in the East Sussex case-study report, Rural Community Councils have considerable flexibility in how they use their resources. The Derbyshire RCC is based in Wirksworth, near Matlock, has a core staff of three and a half, and employs other staff on contracts related to external funding. There are three broad tasks:

- Support for parish councils
- Support for village halls and parochial charities
- Field-work in the Rural Development Areas (RDAs)

Attention here will be almost entirely centred on the education and training content of the field-work. There are three current (1993) RDAs in Derbyshire (map 4):

1. West Derbyshire (most of Derbyshire Dales District and part of High Peak District). This relates to agricultural decline. It was one of the first RDAs (created 1986). There is one part-time field-worker whose contract ends in April 1994. This RDA is likely to be greatly reduced in size in future.

2. North Derbyshire Coalfield. One full-time worker. This RDA may shrink in the future.

3. South Derbyshire, adjoining a larger RDA in North Leicestershire. Currently part of remit of full-time, core-funded field-worker. This RDA is likely to disappear.

Education and training activities may be categorised as:

Training courses

- Derbyshire RCC offers the GLOSCAT Local Policy courses as outlined in the East Sussex case-study, but does not offer local tutorial support. A bid has been put in for RDC/TEC funding to run two RSA Advanced Diploma in the Organisation of Community Groups courses in 94/95: one in partnership with Clowne Tertiary College, the other in the Derbyshire Dales District with Community Education.
- The RCC runs courses for parish clerks, potential parish councillors and new parish councillors.

- Ad hoc courses on particular subjects such as Parish Appraisals, "Parish Maps" and Fund-Raising.

Staff at the RCC felt there was more scope to develop training, but with such a small staff it was difficult to devote the time to it (in East Sussex it is the responsibility of a temporary full-time TEC-funded post). In order to involve the "non-activists" who most need this training, it is necessary to spend time developing contacts and raising aspirations at a local level.

Informal education

The field-worker at the RCC placed a strong emphasis on the informal educational processes involved in any kind of community development work: "I would describe all of the field-work as educational in a very informal sense because I've always linked development work ... with community education because you're empowering people to act on their own behalf. And there has to be some sort of educational process that people go through to be able to do that even if it's, you know, quite simple." (1993 interview) This worker gave as an example a Tea Dance group in a village in South Derbyshire. She had helped them to get funding and talked through issues about organisation (committees etc). Most of the group were older women in a coal-mining area with a long patriarchal tradition, and they lacked the experience of running things for themselves. So this group had been a "big cultural step for them".

A second example concerns her involvement with a group that I visited in South Derbyshire on an isolated public housing estate with a CE worker. A pensioners group had set up in an empty older persons' bungalow and was running a cheerful social club for older people on the estate. The RCC worker had visited them because the local Post Office had shut, and she was interested to see whether it might be possible to locate a Post Office at the bungalow. The CE worker was looking at the possibility of the group becoming a focus for a wider plan to set up a Community Centre on the estate, which in turn could be used for CE activities.

In so far as there are significant differences between Community Development and Community Education, the difference appears to be one of emphasis rather than concept:

- ***Community development*** seeks to empower people through self-organisation. This is seen as an end in itself. It is up to local people what decisions they make about their own futures. Education is seen primarily as process.

- ***Community education*** encourages the formation of groups, but with the explicit expectation that at least some of these groups will generate further education activities for their members. Education is thus seen as process and outcome.

Other writers have tried to distinguish individual and collective aims, but it is clear for example in the Tea Dance group that there have been significant gains for individual members of the group as well as for the collective interests of older people in the area. While Community Education emphasises individual outcomes, there are clear gains for groups which form along the way, plus an overall gain in the quality of life in rural areas.

While emphasising conceptual similarities between CE and Community Development, it is also important to emphasise how budget cuts in Derbyshire have prejudiced some of the real gains

of the CE service. The lack of resources to do development work has strengthened the position within the CE service of those organisers, tutors and students who are more interested in formal educational activities in institutional centres, using organisational models which emphasise professional control over curriculum and over the definition of adult learning. It was clear to me that criticism of aspects of the CE service from a Community Development point of view corresponded to concerns within the CE service itself about decisions forced on them by cuts. If student hours / numbers are regarded as the primary outcome of CE, and resources not made available for development work, then CE will develop as conceptually different from CD, despite the best intentions of those in charge of the service.

Overall, the staff at the RCC in Derbyshire takes a broad view of educational processes. This means that an educational content is defined within some processes not normally conceived of as "community education", and that in turn a critical perspective is offered on the achievements of the CE service in Derbyshire. To put this simply, while CE workers emphasise the informality of their work, RCC workers emphasise its formality and point to other activities which they see as informal community education.

The divided village?

At this point in the report I want to refer to an issue dealt with in the East Sussex report, as to how adult educational organisations deal with social divisions in rural areas, particularly between relatively wealthy incomers (commuters, retirees) and relatively poor "local" people who depend on the rural economy (or state benefits) for their income. The view of the RCC field-worker was that there was a contrast to be drawn between Derbyshire and a southern county such as Kent, where in many cases village organisations had been completely taken over by newcomers and used to defend their own concerns in opposing change of all types:

> *"I think it's very different here. I think in some villages, some of the most attractive ones, where there are a lot of incomers, I think certain sectors are taken over ... but there are certain things they don't get involved in ... and it's certainly not nearly as marked as it is in the South. And of course we've got villages ... that people wouldn't want to move into anyway, like the coalfield villages ..."* (1993 interview)

Her views based on experience of working in Kent correspond to the views on Devon, also based on working experience, mentioned in section 4.5, above. She pointed particularly to groups concerned about the physical environment of villages, such as Civic Trust groups. Such organisations generally claimed to speak for "the whole village" but were seldom concerned with the issues such as housing, education and job creation which are of paramount important to "local" people, and may involve changes to the physical environment of the village. In some cases, parish councils may be taken over as a mouthpiece of incomers' interests; at other times a separate organisation such as a Community Association may be set up.

At the same time, to defend the rights and interests of "local" people is not to defend all aspects of traditional rural life. This worker told me one story of a visit to a parish council meeting where she was publicly told "to go home and breed because it's women like me who go out to work who create all kinds of social problems in rural areas"! Alongside the influence of patriarchy must be set the activity of fascist groups such as the BNP in some rural areas, already referred to in section 4.4 above. In some ways, the incomer to rural life is in a no-win situation: people who don't get involved are dismissed as not interested in the village; those who do are dismissed as busybodies who are trying to take things over. It takes sensitivity and

good social skills to put skills at the disposal of an existing community without appearing to threaten the integrity of that community.

In terms of adult education, the "divided village" presents a dilemma. Both locals and incomers will have educational needs, but the incomers will be much better placed to articulate them. Thus only a service which links educational need to social and economic deprivation, and which has adequate resources for the slow and necessary task of building relationships of trust with people, is likely to be in a position to respond to the complete range of educational needs in a locality.

Parish appraisals

One example of the way that community work and action in villages reflects this theme of the divided village is the village appraisal. In principle, this is a method involving the whole community in collecting information about itself and deciding on possible future scenarios. In practice of course this process may be conducted in the interests of those who want no change in the fabric of the village. There are positive examples in Derbyshire, but I want to concentrate on a negative example which I believe sums up this particular theme. This concerns a village in the High Peak, in the Manchester outer commuter fringe, where an off-shoot of the Civic Trust, run by a lecturer, an artist and an actor, set up a village appraisal. Instead of the work being carried out by the village people themselves, it was done by university undergraduates, the questionnaire distributed concentrated on physical rather than social issues, the response rate was poor, and no clear strategy for implementation was thought out. An unpublished study of this particular village appraisal concluded:

> *... parish appraisals can be used as a vehicle to facilitate community action, but that the process should be sensitive and responsive to a range of issues, including:*
>
> • *over domination of middle class newcomers who steer the policy debate to environmental issues;*
>
> • *that a process should be developed that does not further marginalise those disadvantaged in society;*
>
> • *the role of leadership is of vital importance and should be considered from the outset of the appraisal process;*
>
> • *the widest community should be involved throughout the process;*
>
> • *an organisational vehicle for taking forward the appraisal findings should be considered;*
>
> • *establishing measurable objectives at an early stage in order for the degree of implementation to be assessed;*
>
> • *the community worker's role should be clearly identified from the outset.* (Bovey 1993:80/1)

5.2 Wirksworth: "civil society" in the village

The small town of Wirksworth, where the Derbyshire Rural Community Council has its offices, is a shopping and service centre situated south-west of Matlock on the edge of the Peak National Park. It is also the site of the National Stone Centre, an information and education centre located in a large, old quarry. This is high ground, draining south and west towards Ashbourne, with up to 20 scattered outlying villages and hamlets. On the day of my visit, I was surprised to see the centre of the village covered in snow: however, this proved to be artificial snow, produced by a film crew who were working on an episode of the popular TV series "Peak Practice." On the same day, the Ashbourne to Buxton road, on the western side of the county was closed by "real" snow, and it was a useful reminder of the artificial way in which "the rural" is constructed in mass media culture.

The village boasts a library, which is closed on both Monday and Wednesday, and a Town Council with 11 members, only one of whom is a woman. Local shops struggle to compete with city shops in Derby, an easy half-hour drive away if you are lucky enough to own a car. The local W.I. has done an interesting survey, advertised on a notice-board in the village, which shows that local shops have "average" prices if the costs of transport are taken into account. There is a free community paper *Community Fayre,* which has now reached 66 editions, an enviable record.

The flourishing nature of life in the village is emphasised by the wide range of organisations and events advertised on the various notice-boards around the town. A lot of these are connected with both local and national charities:

- a Christmas charity concert by the Derby Police male voice choir, arranged by the O.A.P. Association
- a Karaoke evening in support of Children in Need
- the Cats Protection League charity shop
- a Seasonal Brass and Voice charity concert

In addition, there is a wide range of other events going on in the town:

- a WI jumble-sale
- a group supporting mothers who want to have their babies at home
- several playgroups
- the Derby Midweek Conservation Volunteers
- the Wirksworth Arts group who have produced a volume of poems called *My town too*
- the Wirksworth Civic Society
- Petsearch - a register of lost and found pets
- a call for volunteers at a local day Centre
- a concert by the University of Stellenbosch Concert Band.

Politics was represented by a notice for a meeting with Ken Coates (Labour MEP for Nottingham) talking about "Europe Now", and a TGWU notice opposing abolition of the

Agricultural Wages Board, popular culture by a coffee morning run by the Wirksworth Well-Dressing Association, sport by an advertisement by the local Badminton Club.

Many of these organisations have a clear informal educational role vis-a-vis their members or members of the public who attend their events. A number of them, such as the Well-Dressing Association, would come under the heading of socio-cultural animation, which has generally not been recognised as a specific educational type in this country. Additionally there are other organisations which have a clear educational focus to their programmes. The local branch of the WEA had a particularly varied programme: Haydn; children's literature; the Jazz Age; calligraphy; writers' workshop; Third World Studies. Community Education were advertising a daytime typing class in the village, with a creche. The Arkwright Society, already referred to in section 4.2, were organising lectures in nearby Cromford, there was an exhibition on at the National Stone Centre. The resources of the present research project are inadequate to enquire in detail into all these organisations, estimate the percentage of the village covered by their events, and to come to conclusions about who, if anyone, is excluded from participation in informal community learning. However, there is some evidence in Wirksworth of a healthy civil society with informal adult learning as an important component.

The group offering support to women wanting to give birth at home is particularly suggestive for further research into how learning linked to social change operates, particularly in the fields of health and disability. One national organisation which operates with particular success in rural areas is the Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Society (SANDS). It operates on a countywide basis, with an informal network based mainly on self-help and hence complementing whatever statutory services may exist for this purpose. There is a national Group Development and Training officer and a wide variety of conferences and workshops are held for both members and health professionals.

6. The microstudy: South Derbyshire

6.1 Introduction

The microstudy area is shown in map 5. It consists of a mass of small to medium-sized villages and one small town, Swadlincote, with a population of 25,000. As shown in map 4, much of it is currently an RDA, but unlikely to continue in that position. While some villages have developed from ancient agricultural communities, others have developed as mining villages. One of the most curious of these consists of a couple of rows of houses built for a mine that was eventually not sunk. There is a logic to the pattern of agricultural settlement, a logic to the pattern of mining settlement; but in the 1990s, the area has no particular logic, and the spatial distribution of population feels random and artificial. There is also commuting in the area, both into Derby City, and across the county border into Burton-on-Trent, around which the area neatly curls (see map 2). The picture of a rural-urban continuum is still further complicated by the existence of isolated public housing developments in the Swadlincote area, and by the establishment of the Toyota factory at Burnaston (map 5). As indicated above, the decline of the coal-mining industry here is a long-established fact of life, and there has thus been more time for the local economy to diversify. Additionally, the traditional pottery industry in Swadlincote still continues, and has developed new computer-controlled production methods; the specialism is sanitary ware. Although the last pit closed in 1988, the headquarters of the National Coal Board Technical Department between Swadlincote and Burton still employs 500 people, although its future is uncertain.

The pattern of village population is extremely complicated. 34 parishes have grown between 1981 and 1991, 17 have declined. However, taken over the period 1901 to 1991, no less than 18 parishes, including most of the smaller ones, have declined in population, yet the overall population has increased by over 50%, with the medium-sized communities accounting for a substantial part of that growth.

An emblematic feature of Swadlincote is the dry ski-slope which overlooks the town centre. This was built on the slag-heap of the local pit. It is a useful starting-point to reflect on the changes that have taken place in the area, and also the education and training needs that have come with those changes:

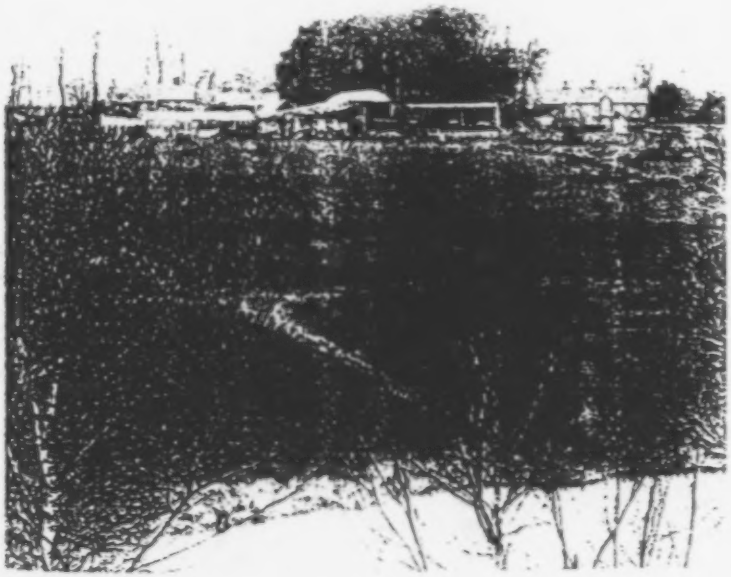
	coal-mine	**ski-slope**
Nature of industry	primary	tertiary
Purpose of work	production	consumption (leisure)
Labour force	labour-intensive numerous	labour-extensive small
Skills	mostly manual some technical a few professional	balance of manual, technical and professional skills

The other "sign of the times" is the Countryside Commission's plan for a National Forest from Needword Forest, west of Burton in Staffordshire, through Swadlincote to the Leicestershire towns of Ashby-de-la-Zouch and Coalville, ending in Charnwood Forest. This has important implications for the alternative use of agricultural land, the rehabilitation of mining land, and the creation of new jobs in leisure-based industries.

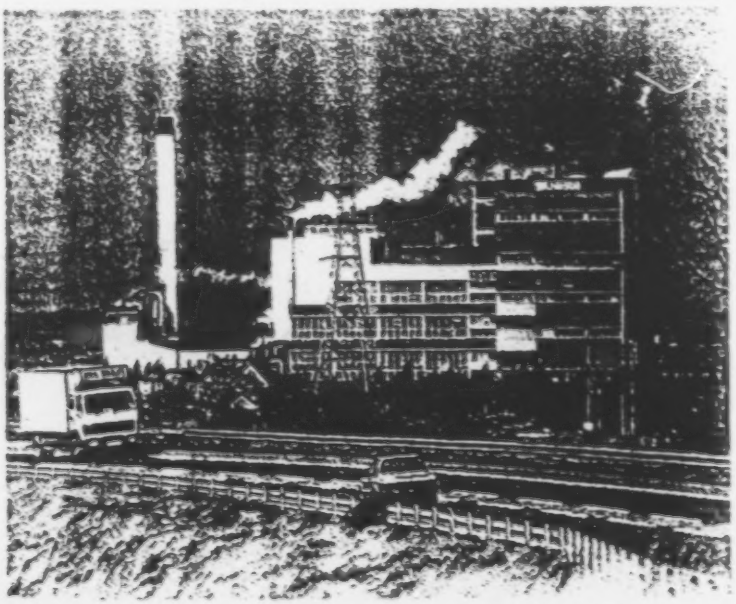
What we see here in South Derbyshire is an ex-coalfield one stage on, with diversification of employment possibilities and changing patterns of land use and human movement. At June 1983, the unemployment rate of 8.1% was one of the lowest in the county, and the rate of increase in the previous 12 months below both county and national averages. Main concern is in the town of Swadlincote itself, with unemployment running at 11.1%. The part of the area north of Swadlincote has very low unemployment, 4.3% in the Repton/Melbourne are and 5.4% in the Hatton/Hilton area. This reflects its growth as a Derby City commuter belt and the new Toyota factory.

Etwall

In Etwall, the village next to Burnaston and the Toyota factory, the main social needs are in relation to young women with children, and the loneliness and isolation that comes from being without daytime transport. At the same time, the situation of the individuals unemployed here is equally bad as in a village with large amounts of unemployment. One young woman I spoke to had been told by the Job Centre to attend a work experience course in Derby, but it involved 2 buses and had proved impracticable. Her husband had done a course at the Broomfields Agricultural College, at Morley on the other side of Derby, to which he had cycled every day.



South Derbyshire



Industry in the Countryside: Factory at Hatton, South Derbyshire

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But he had only been able to find casual employment as a result. This woman had been born and brought up in the village. I met her in the context of a CE craft class. She had been attracted on to the Need-to-Know bus (see below) but while that was being overhauled, the class had moved into the village hall. Some students had left, others had joined.

The class is now dominated by a group of enthusiastic students, a majority of whom travel by car from other villages. These are the joiners, the enthusiastic supporters of traditional "leisure" adult education, and a wide range of village clubs and societies (see appendix 2 for Etwall village diary, November 1993). One of them told me about a Ladies' Friendship group in her village which had been meeting for 30 years, and had grown from a Young Wives group. It is a social group, but also has speakers from charitable organisations such as the NCH and Samaritans, and puts on entertainment and parties for older people. This, then, is the "quality of life" argument for adult education, both formal and informal. But the extent to which the young woman I spoke to is able to use adult education to improve her life chances depends more on her success in the literacy class she attends at the local school in the evening, and on the quality of educational guidance she is able to get through, for example, the mobile project.

[*Further reference will be made to Etwall in section 6.4 of this report.]*

Hartshorne

An interesting contrast to Etwall is Hartshorne, a fairly large village near Swadlincote. Here I met another crafts group, including several children, who were "camping out" in the back room of the Methodist church due to the absence of the Need-to-Know bus. Three of the group were church members and had begun making things for the church Christmas Fair. The village also has a Ladies Group, a Mother-and-Toddler Group, Brownies, Over 50s club, Bowling in the village hall and a "Village Welcome" club for older people. At first sight, this group seemed to match perfectly critiques of this kind of adult education provision as being about containment of women within traditional female occupations. The organiser talked to them about the future of the group, and whether it would be possible to increase numbers by attracting other women into it. She also talked about a women's returners group in a neighbouring village. This attracted the attention of a younger woman with a young child. She had been an office worker and receptionist but was beginning to think about a possible return to work. In her own words: "You sort of get behind when you've been out of work. You lose touch." The new group matched her aspirations very well. Thus one can see that provision which starts from familiar activities can lead on to very different sorts of involvement in adult education, which is a particular emphasis of the South Derbyshire mobile project.[7]

Later in the afternoon, I came across a large hall attached to the Anglican church in the village. Regular teas are held here for senior citizens, and on this particular afternoon, about 90 had gathered to sing carols and have tea. This is purely voluntary effort, of impressive size, with 20 cars and disability transport in the car-park. I was later to discover that this village had also been the focus for work by the RCC development worker. A village appraisal had been carried out by the local people themselves:

> *Yet, despite being completed some time ago, local people are still acting on its recommendations. For example, a significant finding was that one of the local authority housing estates had a very high proportion of elderly and housebound people with little or no access to social*

[7] There is an excellent discussion of this point, with reference to South Derbyshire, in McGivney (1987:94/95)

> *facilities. A highly successful Community Retirement Group has been established in **direct response** (her emphasis) to this finding ... and it goes from strength to strength organising social and recreational activities. Indeed in 1991 the group won the coveted Derbyshire Village Ventures award for its achievements.* (Bovey 1993:70)

The range of activities I saw that afternoon supports the contention in section 5, above, that community development and community education are not conceptually different activities, but that community education's distinctiveness lies in placing learning as an **outcome** of activity, as well as an integral part of the **process** of a community taking responsibility for local action.

6.2 Community Education in South Derbyshire

Swadlincote: the Need-to-Know Centre

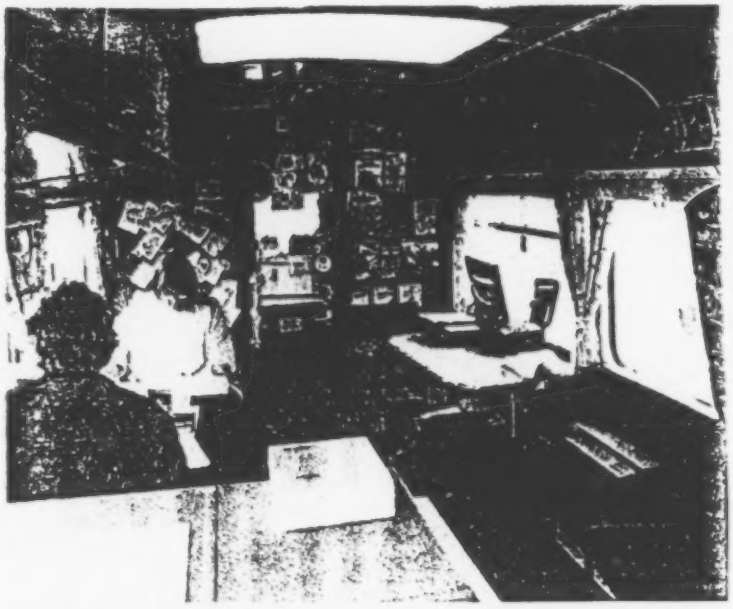
This is a small, modern building in a side street off the main shopping street. It houses an office on the ground floor which also doubles as a "shop-front" initial point of access for members of the public. Upstairs is a small suite of rooms with a social area, facilities for group work and individual guidance sessions. It is well equipped with Information Technology. Courses run at the centre are English, Information Technology, Word-Processing, Dressmaking, Creative Writing, Maths and Confidence Building and Assertiveness.

The importance of adult basic education

If the provision of informal learning groups within which confidence and aspirations can grow in a relatively "safe" atmosphere, is one emphasis of the Community Education service in South Derbyshire, another is the strong emphasis on Basic Education as the base of adult learning. It is perhaps worth repeating here that the best figure we have for adult illiteracy in the UK is the 13% of adults in the mid-80s ALBSU study who reported problems with ether literacy or numeracy, at home or at work (Hamilton 1987). At the Need-to-Know Centre in Swadlincote I met a student who had missed a lot of schooling because of medical problems. After bringing up 5 children (she also has 6 grandchildren) she had finally taken the plunge and was working to fill the gaps in her own education. Her husband had been made redundant from coal-mining in his early 50s. Initially her studies were treated with laughter or scepticism by the family; now her husband is worrying that she is becoming "too big for her boots". The friendly, informal atmosphere of the centre was just right for her - she said of her tutor: "she's the kind of person, she puts you at your ease and that's what you want when you come back." She has completed a City and Guilds foundation course and is now working for an RSA examination in English; she has also started Maths. She hopes to become a volunteer tutor and help other people in her position. As part of her studies she has spent a weekend at the residential Northern College near Barnsley, the first time she had been away from home on her own.

Mobile project: the Need-to-Know bus

The early history of the Need-to-Know project is covered by Veronica McGivney in her study of participation and non-participation (McGivney 1990: 50-52). Originally funded as a joint project between ALBSU and Derbyshire County Council, it was taken on by the county on termination of ALBSU funding. It began with a caravan which could be towed around the area and parked up in different places, providing information and advice, homecraft subjects, and



Need-to Know-Bus

Need-to-Know Bus

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basic education. The caravan was seen as a "spearhead" for the establishment of fixed classes in particular locations, at which point the caravan would move on.

McGivney concludes that "the service was perceived primarily as a support to people in their everyday lives, providing further evidence of the importance of using everyday concerns as a starting point in outreach work." (McGivney 1990:51). Other conclusions relate to the importance of external funding in establishing developmental projects, the importance that initiatives are continued by local adult education providers, and on both sides a willingness to accept that "the progress of work will necessarily be slow, developmentally irregular and achievement will be in small, incremental stages." (Janet White, project director, internal report, 1987). Not only was the project taken over by DCC but was enlarged by the purchase and conversion of a single-decker coach to replace the old caravan. The capital costs were funded by the ESF. The staff team cover a range of skills including crafts, basic education , computing and educational guidance:

> *Offering this range of options provides visitors with a reason for calling - an opportunity to explore options, enjoy a "taste" of a new activity, without commitment, or building relationships to encourage trust in case of need for help or advice on personal or family issues, or visitors can simply enjoy a social morning or afternoon with other local people.* (internal DCC report)

At the time of my visit to Derbyshire (November/December 1993) the Need-to-Know bus was temporarily off the road for internal refurbishing. However, this was seen as a tribute to the success of the project and the intensive use made of the bus, rather than any intrinsic weakness of mobile systems. A sample week on the bus is included as appendix 3 of this report.

The South Derbyshire villages

Although people do come into Swadlincote from more rural areas of South Derbyshire, considerable effort is made to bring Community Education into closer contact with local communities. There are 3 separate Community Education Council areas: South Derbyshire (Swadlincote), Dove Valley and Trent Valley (Melbourne). Each area has classes in a small group of villages. However, the number of village classes is small compared with the total number of villages and hence the importance of the mobile project. It is important to realise that adult education existed in the area **before** the CE policy was developed. Some of the older CE workers feel that the necessary resources have never been made available to fully implement the CE plan, a situation made worse by cuts made necessary by central government restrictions on DCC expenditure. Public transport is not particularly good, with many bus routes going into Burton-on-Trent in Staffordshire. Many of the villages do not have a direct bus route to Swadlincote, the main centre of the area. Social divisiveness can also make organising difficult: one village was mentioned which is 50% public housing, 50% dormitory commuter village: if anything is put on in the village, either one group comes or the other. The net result is that it is difficult to sustain groups. In another village a successful class runs, but all the people come in from outside the village. In general, there is pessimism about the future of village work: there is no longer sufficient funding to finance effective development work, which involves the painstaking business of making contact with individuals and groups, offering advice and guidance, building confidence and motivation, the very things that the CE structures were put in place to provide.

However, the work continues. It is difficult to generalise about the village work, so one example must suffice. It relates to a village of 600 people in the market-gardening area around Melbourne. The organiser takes up the story:

> *We originally started by taking the bus over there, one morning a week, and using that as a signpost to flag up the fact that we are actually going to be bothered with them. And try and gauge what their opinion is, what sort of activities they actually want. ... We did a leaflet drop in every household, with a little slip on it, you know, "what activities would you like to see in this area?" ... And we got a resounding response of nil, you know, none of them returned at all, 200 households and there was nothing returned at all. So although we've got a captive audience in the local Mother-and-Toddler club who are meeting at the same time we decided to go over there, which was one of the reasons for going over there that day, you've obviously got inroads there, and with the local school as well who are very keen to use our facilities ... So we've decided we're going to run a taster morning next week (in the village hall), where we'll take staff down, do various activities for people to come along and have a go at, and hopefully we'll begin to open up a dialogue from there. So really we've tried three strategies within a period of six weeks, and hopefully from that something will be generated, if they want it. If they don't want it, then we'll say, "OK, fair enough, we've tried it ..." "* (1993 interview)

The key elements of CE are here: the sense of a dialogue with local people, the tentative nature of initial contacts, the use of existing facilities and organisations within a community, the willingness to use a variety of strategies, even the willingness to accept that a community may reject what is on offer. It is also clear that CE has to come to terms with pre-existing village activities; for example a regular evening class in a village hall would have to take account of bookings for the parish council, quiz league and so on.

Work in schools

If using village halls raises problems, there are also difficulties about the use of school premises. The original concept in the primary schools was the "community room", a focus for parent activity and involvement. Some schools retain this concept, but in others it has been clawed back for other uses. Where CE is working in schools, this is often in the context of one of these "community rooms." CE has access to materials and equipment (e.g. Computing) which the school (especially a small primary school) may not have, so there is mutual advantage in the presence of CE in a school. A few schools, however, resist any outside involvement in the school. Further, schools carry on community activities which are nothing to do with CE:

> *"Which we have no objection to. We don't see the community dimension as solely our responsibility. If a school has that relationship ... then that's fine, that's what it's all about. Our role comes in that we might kick-start new initiatives, we might support new developments; in the end, the ultimate goal is to make that activity or that group stand on their own two feet. We don't see ourselves as being the constant provider."* (CE organiser, 1993 interview)

These autonomous community initiatives in schools include Women's groups, Mothers-and-Toddlers groups, retirement groups. Such groups can contribute to the curriculum work of the school, but in turn are given use of facilities and recognised as part of the school community. A number of such initiatives relate to the existence of community tutor posts in schools, often on a shared basis, which were cut in 1991. As elsewhere in Derbyshire, there is concern about the availability of money for development work in the future, both because of possible DCC cuts and the loss of RDA status. Development work is increasingly something that CE organisers use their own time on, with day-to-day centre organisation being left to part-time secretarial staff. If the CE service were forced to retreat into a "non-developmental" role, then it would lose much of its distinctive and innovatory nature.

Links with colleges and progression issues

An arrangement was arrived at with a Tertiary College in Derby, under which academic and vocational work was provided under contract for the CE service. CE provided administrative support and use of premises, the College provided the tutor, creche facilities and student support. In principle, progression to Further and Higher Education would then be straightforward. The reality was that it did not happen, and the result was a "satellite" programme with students reluctant to attend study weekends at college, or to take their exams there. Under the new FEFC structure, the CE service is sponsored through the college to provide RSA and GCSE courses, the college having decided to withdraw from this outreach programme.

The organisers of the CE service felt that there was much more success in leading people on from "leisure" classes to academic and vocational courses with RSA or GCSE accreditation. There are agreed progression routes within the service (internal paper 1992). Educational guidance was seen as central to this to this process, and again the availability of staff time for this labour intensive activity was seen as crucial: "I spend a lot of time talking to students about what they do, what the possibilities are, trying to help them through the maze of where they're going, really" (CE organiser, 1993 interview). Qualifications are seen as a major motivator and confidence-booster for adults. Even where a qualification was not the students' aim, they did want structure and clearly perceived outcomes from subject areas such as Photography or foreign languages. "Caring" courses, such as PPA and "caring for the elderly" courses, had also become much more clearly structured, with a series of discrete subject modules. This in turn has involved a considerable effort of tutor-training with part-time tutors. There is also progression to access and vocational courses at Wilmorton College in Derby and Burton-on-Trent College.

A further initiative which should be noted is in relation to the South Derbyshire post-16 Centre at Pingle School in Swadlincote, which provides post-16 courses for students from the three local secondary schools, plus adults. This has three strands:

1. Adults taking part in courses such as "A" level, GCSE, BTEC and GNVQ. From 1994/95 these courses will be available in "blocked" time to avoid the problems noted elsewhere in this project of adult students having to attend on a number of scattered occasions during the week to complete one courses

2. The availability of courses to adults on a day-release basis

3. CE courses in subjects such as Word-Processing, Japanese and Typing held in the Centre, with school students having access to these as "Complimentary courses".

This school is unusual in Derbyshire in being GMS, which is an interesting demonstration that co-operation as well as competition and conflict can exist within the new quasi-market circumstances of education.

6.3 Northern College

The Northern College is a residential adult education college near Barnsley (South Yorkshire). It provides both short term and long term residential education for adults. The advantages of residential adult education are described in this way:

> *Residential education gives people the opportunity to follow uninterrupted study. They can work, read and discuss and devote themselves to the kind of concentrated effort which might not be possible in their home surroundings. Contacts with students and the tutorial staff of the College give adults from different backgrounds the opportunity to share their experiences, increase their confidence and achieve new and often unrealised goals and ambitions.* (Northern College 1992)

In 1991/92 (90/91 figures in brackets), the College provided places for 186 (189) Derbyshire students on courses, 102 (124) for members of community groups, 31 (39) through collaborative work with adult education in conjunction with Derbyshire colleges, and 52 (26) through individuals taking part in open courses . Thirty-two of the 52 individual students had their first contact with Northern College through a course arranged for a community group. There is a tutor organiser for Derbyshire, and work is concentrated in Derby City, Glossop and North-East Derbyshire.

The particular objective of focusing on Northern College within the microstudy is to look at the experience of two students who took part in a Special Project which the College ran in South Derbyshire in the late 80s. Staffing consisted of a project leader, a member of staff from a tertiary college in Derby for the "urban" student group, and a member of the South Derbyshire CE team for the two "rural" student group (Moffatt 1992). Both students are women: Mandy belonged to the rural group who met in Swadlincote; Sally to the other rural group at Coton-in-the-Elms.

Student 1 ("Mandy")

Mandy lives in a small village near Swadlincote. There is a bus service, but it is unreliable and the timetable changes frequently. She used to walk into Swadlincote (30-35 minutes) but more recently has suffered from arthritis. This makes her dependent on her partner or other students for lifts. Her initial contact with adult education was through the Job Centre who referred her to the Need-to-Know caravan to talk about a course for women returners. 20 years previously she had worked as an (unqualified) work study engineer, having moved over from being an office supervisor. She received on-the-job training. Her first course was a short introductory word-processing course at Northern College, and later in the year she joined the Special Project

GCSE Sociology group at the suggestion of the Project Leader who had talked to her at Northern College. In addition to the Sociology course, she also took English and Maths at the Need-to-Know centre and started work as a voluntary tutor. After completing the Sociology course she went to Northern College as a full-time student on the 2-year Social and Community Studies course. She had some concerns about the effect on adult students of studying sociology, it can provide people with excuses for their own sense of failure:

> *"I think it's a good thing if people then go on to use it positively ... Somewhere along the line it's got to be said, 'O.K., you've had a rough time, we can understand why you've had a rough time, let's put that to one side and let's go on from there, let's make something of it. Don't make it an excuse, make it a positive thing to build on'."*

The course itself consisted of a two-hour weekly meeting, plus reading and writing assignments which the students had to do in their own time. Some students, including Mandy, formed self-help groups to work on the assignments during the week. There was also a study skills component at Northern College. She also met up on a regular basis with a student in the Derby City group whom she had met at Northern College. Most of the group were married women plus one man. Some had educational qualifications (e.g. GCSEs) but they had all been out of education for a long time. All of them had to make adjustments in their private lives to make the time for the class, especially the home-study component. This was more difficult for women with young children than for Mandy, whose children were grown-up. In addition, 40% of the women were in part-time work, and 18% in full-time work. Co-operation from partners and families could not always be counted on and great determination was needed to see the course through. As mentioned in relation to the North-East Derbyshire Coalfield project, patriarchal attitudes are deeply entrenched in coal-mining and ex-mining areas.

Looking back on her experience of adult education, she could see clear benefits for herself, but the prospect of satisfying work seemed as far away as ever. She now has 120 credits to a university degree and would like to complete a degree, though she regards this as unlikely to actually happen! But the most obvious career outlet - social work - does not appeal to her. She feels she has spent too much time supporting other people in the rest of her life.

Student 2: "Sally"

Sally is at the centre of a friendship and support network that built up around her involvement in adult education. She was late for our meeting, having been to collect another ex-Northern College student from hospital. She has her own car and works in the evenings at a hotel in Ashby-de-la-Zouch (Leicestershire). She had been using the Need-to-Know centre in Swadlincote, doing a community activists' course in support of her voluntary work; as part of this course she attended Northern College, and later did a Women's Studies course there. Despite this involvement with Swadlincote, she joined the Coton Special Project group to boost the numbers there. One session a week was held in the local school, but the group would get together in the evening for discussion and revision work; she acted as driver for the group. Only 3 members of the group lived in the village; two others came out from Burton for the course. Sally left school at 15, with no opportunity to take exams at her Secondary Modern School. She worked as a shop assistant and later as a general assistant in a hotel. After marriage she managed a hotel with her husband. This ended when they started a family, and her husband decided, despite his hotel training, to go down the pit! Since then he has experienced redundancy and unemployment.

Sally joined the Sociology course because her children were growing up, she enjoyed learning, and she felt that she had "grown out of" the child-minding and play-groups stage of her life. Since then she has done English, Environmental Studies, Law and Child Development at GCSE level, and Sociology at "A" level, within the Community Education service. The main outcomes for her have been her ability to help her own secondary age children with their school work. She also helps in a voluntary capacity at local schools and in the Youth Service, as well as child-minding. When her youngest leaves junior school, she would like to qualify for a professional job, possibly in teaching, using the link between Wilmorton College in Derby and the De Montfort University in Leicester (see section 4.1 above). An important part of her thinking is the reopening for passenger services of the rail link from Burton through Swadlincote to Leicester.[8] This would make her less dependent on her old and not totally reliable car. At one point she had been accepted on an Access course in Burton, but it was at a campus on the far side of Burton, the course finished at 3, and her local school finished at 3. Not only would she have to pay someone to mind her own children, but she would lose her own child-minding income!

A number of general points can be drawn from the experience of these two students from the Northern College Special Project in South Derbyshire:

- Inter-agency collaboration and the existence of development projects are both key elements in developing learning opportunities for rural people, especially women
- The way that spatial problems complicate the other well-known problems of access to education for women with children is a distinctive feature of access to adult education in rural areas.
- Residential adult education has positive gains for people living in rural areas
- The encouragement of networking between students can facilitate adult learning in rural areas
- Even where barriers to participation are overcome, questions remain about job prospects in the current depressed state of the UK economy. As Mandy put it: "If you want pigs to fly, give them flying lessons *and* aeroplanes to fly".

6.4 Popular culture?

Derbyshire is distinctive, but not unique, in the UK in that it has retained a number of remnants of traditional popular culture in a country where by and large "culture" has come to be synonymous with middle-class "highbrow" artistic culture and "popular culture" has come to be synonymous with the mass culture of the mass media. Unlike in France or Spain, where the encouragement of such activities is seen as socio-cultural animation, and regarded as part of adult education, such activities have been largely ignored here, except in specialised academic courses on "folklore", usually run by university extra-mural departments. Where folklore

[8] The potential of rail routes as progression routes for adult learners is an under-researched area! See also Salveson (1993).

presents the popular culture of the past as a historical curiosity, popular culture as living culture can be seen as an ongoing expression of social relationships linked to a particular place.

In some villages well-dressing has a largely unbroken history; it others it can be seen as part of the tourist industry - a way of encouraging visitors to the village; in still others it is a recent innovation. Generally it is an activity which involves "local people" since much of the knowledge integral to the activity exists only in the heads of local people (the whereabouts of springs, the qualities of certain kinds of plant material). Yet there are also obvious opportunities to involve newcomers with specific skills, such as graphic arts or fund-raising. A worker at Derbyshire RCC described it as "a real chance for people in the community to get together." (1993 interview).

In Etwall (cf section 6.1) well-dressing was revived in 1970 by the Parent-Teacher Association at the local school and the W.I. (Smith 1990). Money raised was put towards a new learner swimming-pool. There was no oral memory of well-dressing in the village, and they had to visit other villages to learn about the crafts involved. The following year the Well-Dressing Association (WDA) was formed, and many visitors are attracted to the village by the carnival atmosphere of the well-dressing weekend in May. Money raised goes to local village causes and to charities. There is a steering committee of officers plus a representative of each well in the village: the wells themselves may be the responsibility of an organisation (PTA, WI, youth organisation), of a particular street, and in one case of a nearby village. The charities to be supported are chosen at the AGM, which is attended by 70/80 people. The Well-Dressing Association does its own informal education in other villages which want to revive well-dressing by taking demonstration boards to show them.

While it is the middle-aged and older people who take on the artistic and organising side of the well-dressing, younger people in the village are quite happy to take part in the carnival events of the May weekend. The view of the Chairman of the WDA is that "It's the only time in the village that everyone from every walk of life gets together and has a go." (1993 interview) It thus represents a challenge to pessimistic views of post-modern consumer society. Bauman, for example, emphasises the mass media and consumerism as the main tools of social control for those in paid work or dependent on paid workers. He describes this groups as "the seduced". He also identifies a second group ("the repressed") dependent on state benefits, unable to participate in consumer culture, and controlled by police, state and ideology (Bauman 1987:169). Equally, the diary of village events (appendix 2) reflects a society where face-to-face life continues to thrive alongside the privatised life-style of consumer society.

I am certainly not arguing that the processes of informal education involved in sustaining the popular cultural life of a village such as Etwall do not exist in urban communities. My point is a simple one: in some rural communities cultural life can take distinctive forms which can only be understood in terms of the broader cultural history of rural England, and which present a more attractive image of English life than warm beer, cricket and xenophobia!

6.5 Workplace learning

I was able to visit a medium-sized food-processing factory in one village where CE has funding from an ALBSU development fund to develop workplace learning. Basic Education classes are held in the lunch-break. A nominal fee is charged. There is an emphasis on keyboard skills, word-processing, confidence-building and assertiveness training, and English. Most of the "students" are women manual workers, many of whom have worked for the firm for up to 20

years, and work away from the main line on "non-shift" work, with a full hour for lunch (see below for problems of shift-workers). Younger women tended to be more mobile and think in terms of a wider labour market, but for many of these older women, the factory was the best work opening available in the local area, and they could walk or cycle to work. The mechanics of the provision are very difficult: the women snatch a quick lunch before coming to the rooms where the class is held, and have to allow 5-10 minutes to get back to their work-station: effectively this gives them 35 minutes learning time! From the workers point of view, this is a rare opportunity for personal development; the firm, though, is clearly thinking of how to handle possible future redundancies and the needs of the internal labour market as production becomes more technologically sophisticated.

Despite the practical problems, the response of this group of workers is very positive: "I thought that even if I only get a qualification in my own right, then I'd be happy, you know, at least it's a skill you know." (Woman laundry worker). They liked the Open Learning format, with the tutor available to trouble-shoot when problems arose. She would not have gone to "night-school": in addition to the tiredness that comes from physical work, and the demands of domestic work, she felt that the other students would have been much brighter than her: "whereas, trying it out in the lunchtime, now, if it finished, I would go to night school." In essence this is the case for providing general education courses in the workplace: students are able to work through educational deficiencies with their peers. A woman packer who had worked for the firm for twenty years saw this as an opportunity to learn new skills which would be useful at home, typing letters and keeping up with the children. She had never been to evening classes because she had generally worked on the evening shift. This group was so keen that they were prepared to pay for the class to keep up the provision.

The Assertiveness Training group was very small, but seemed to be producing results for the women involved. These included the willingness to consider change of jobs within the factory, and a recognition that they could keep up with younger workers. The factory operates a job rotation scheme to try to deal with tedious, repetitive work, and is also introducing team-work.

Meanwhile the firm wanted to move provision on to German, with a class consisting of one manager, 4 office-workers, 2 charge-hands and a truck-driver. The office-workers only have a 45-minute lunch-break and had been told they could have an extra 15 minutes to attend the course. However, this would make a significant change of emphasis from the current stress on basic skills for manual workers.

Staff-time included some time for talking to employees in the canteen and encouraging them to come to the classes. It was also an opportunity to pass on information about educational opportunities outside the factory, though there was no scheme in place to provide employees with financial incentives to attend classes outside the factory. I was surprised to discover that the tutors had not been able to visit the factory and see the actual work in process: there seemed to be a lack of mutual confidence between the firm and the education workers. There was also no trade union involvement, which can be useful both in recruiting potential students, and also in arguing for better conditions under which classes can be held (e.g. an element of time off so that a decent length of time is available for the class, and the recognition that such classes should be free). The unions had originally opposed the work as "training on the cheap" and their acceptance of it was still reluctant. The question of giving up the lunch-break was a particular obstacle to participation in this scheme for manual workers: the factory is a noisy place and the lunch-hour was seen as a "sacred time" (tutor) which they did not want to give up: "if the firm would give the, say, 15 minutes in which to go to the canteen, they'd then be in

ALBSU Basic Skills at Work Project, Nestle Factory, Hatton

Nestle Factory, Hatton

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a better frame of mind to give some of their own time to the classes. That is basically the reason, as far as I've been told" (tutor). The firm have rejected completely giving these workers time off for study, and the unions have not taken the issue up.

In general, the conditions of work in the factory did not seem to be conducive to implementing a learning programme, and the relatively small gains from this project must be measured against the disincentives:

> *"People on the factory floor start at 7.30, they have a ten-minute break for breakfast, a ten-minute coffee-break, and because of the queues in the canteen, if they want breakfast and toilets, no can do, they have to decide which they're in need of! They dare not be late back on the line. Lunch-time is (only 40 minutes for shift-workers), which lets a lot of people out of classes anyway - they just haven't got the time. People like [A] and [B] have a full hour, but some of them, because of the noise and the environment really feel that they need time to have a meal in leisurely surroundings, and do their own thing, take the paper they read or a magazine, do a bit of knitting, have a chat, just unwind. They're saying: 'this is my time, not firm's time'".*(tutor)

One wonders how many idealistic exponents of an extension of adult learning opportunities would work under these sorts of conditions! If human development is to become an integral part of paid work, then more human working conditions are clearly a priority. At the same time, the firm is beginning to take on some of these issues. The company has already committed itself to rewriting its training scheme in response to the project, and in particular the lack of success in persuading employees to give up their lunch-breaks:

> *"The company has now realised that to support basic skills needs, they need to write it into their company policy and change their training procedures, so that they can identify basic skills needs and put them in as an integral part of training. So the general outcome is that they will rewrite their training policy, which is the most tremendous outcome".*
> (CE organiser)

CE will probably be involved in this new policy in terms of "training the trainers" and ongoing basic skills courses.

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Appendix 1

Derbyshire Employee Development Initiative

BACKGROUND AND GENERAL INFORMATION

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DeDi

Derbyshire Employee Development Initiative

Background

The county of Derbyshire has a long tradition of providing a highly motivated and skilled workforce to major industrial and business concerns. Both the private and public sectors in the county engage in a wide diversity of commercial activity which has contributed in significant ways to local and national wealth. High performance work organisations need a committed and flexible workforce which is able and willing to respond to rapidly changing demands. These demands have been made more urgent because of the collapse of traditional industries, the demand for different types of skills, the wider use of new technologies, the effects of recession and the demographic changes.

In the context of rapid change and the competitive nature of modern business, there is a strong conviction from all perspectives that investing in people is the key to economic survival. This has highlighted the urgent economic need to provide and maintain broad educational provision of the highest quality, and to make stronger connections between education, employers, trade unions and TECs.

In response to these pressing needs, in September 1991, the Education Committee of Derbyshire County Council approved a proposal to establish the Derbyshire Employment Development Initiative (DeDi), a county-wide employee development programme based upon schemes like the Ford Employee Development and Assistance Programme (EDAP), Investors in People and the Rover Learning Business. Following the appointment of the DeDi project team, the initiative became operational in April, 1992.

Programme objectives and approaches

The DeDi programme is not an altruistic act. Employee development programmes provide individuals with broad educational opportunities which enhance the ability of people to adapt, to learn and to improve continuously. DeDi aims to develop a more confident, flexible and responsive workforce in Derbyshire which contributes to wider economic and community regeneration in the next decade and beyond.

The principal objective of DeDi is to encourage and support personal development and learning opportunities for employees in the county of Derbyshire, through a partnership between education and training providers, employers, trade unions and Training and Enterprise Councils.

Derbyshire Employee Development Initiative

The central purposes of DeDi are to provide frameworks which enable employees to gain access to broad educational opportunities and return to learning. DeDi operates in parallel with job related training and is not intended as a substitute for the normal training arrangements which organisations need to make, however, evidence indicates that where employee development programmes are established they enhance, complement and extend training provision.

In practice, if a company or organisation decide to establish a DeDi programme, two essential features would be present to ensure success. Firstly, DeDi requires an active and long term commitment from management and trade unions to the principle that there is value in learning. Secondly, it is important to seek educational advice during the planning process and to provide on-going guidance and counselling for employees engaging in programmes.

The emphasis within DeDi is upon return to learning with the explicit aim of ensuring that the process of learning and the experience of study will provide access into further adult and continuing education. The framework for DeDi allows innovative projects to be developed which respect and take into account specific needs and local contexts. Programmes are planned jointly between representatives from management, trade unions, employees and education providers.

Education initiatives need not be costly. Finance for a DeDi programme is provided by the company, often based upon agreements between employers and trade unions, who establish an employee development fund with an investment of between £30 and £60 per employee per year. This fund is administered by a committee with representation from management, trade unions, employees and education. Employees may claim upon this fund to cover the cost of fees for approved courses they wish to pursue.

With support from the DeDi fund, employees are encouraged and advised into a range of educational activities. Guidance and support comes from an education provider and employees can engage in a range of activities including, for example, basic literacy and numeracy, practical skills, health-related activities, computer skills, languages and certificated courses up to degree level.

Employees pursue DeDi programmes in their own time and the locations may be work-based, institution based, and through open or distance learning. Where work-based learning centres are established, there are higher levels of participation and more productive relationships develop between the education provider and employees. Programmes are timed to match shift and work patterns of employees.

Appendix 2 Etwall Village Diary

Diary for November

Mon	1	Etwall Parish Council meeting 7.30pm Frank Wickham Hall
Tue	2	Etwall O.A.P.Social Club Table Games
Wed	3	Etwall Good Companions Club Bingo
		Egginton Mothers Union - Mrs Goddard
		Whist Drive 7.30pm Frank Wickham Hall
Thu	4	BACK UP Christmas Coffee Evening 7pm Methodist Schoolroom
		10.00am Holy Communion at St Helen's
Sat	6	Etwall Primary School PTA Bonfire - gates open 6.30pm at the Cricket Club
		Egginton PTA Bonfire - Catherine Jonathon 6.30pm
Mon	8	Egginton Parish Council meeting 7.30pm Memorial Hall
		Grocery Bingo 7.30pm Frank Wickham Hall
Tue	9	Etwall O.A.P. Social Club - Discussion Christmas Party
		Etwall W.I. - Mr D Smith 'Old Postcards'
Wed	10	Egginton Jubilee Club meeting Memorial Hut 2.30pm
		Etwall Good Companions Club Games
		Whist Drive 7.30pm Frank Wickham Hall
Thu	11	10.00am Holy Communion at St Helen's
		Etwall Village Playgroup COFFEE MORNING Pavilion 9.15 - 11.45am
		Etwall Womens Fellowship - Mrs Grace Tointon
Sat	13	Etwall W.I. Autumn Fair 2pm Frank Wickham Hall
		Egginton Jubilee Club Annual Autumn Fair 2.30pm Memorial Hall,Games in Hut 2pm.
		St Helen's Musical Evening 7.30pm
Mon	15	Burnaston W.I. 7.30pm - Dorothy Mycock 'Christmas Cooking'
Tue	16	Etwall O.A.P.Social Club Bingo & Raffle
Wed	17	Etwall Good Companions Club - Mr & Mrs Land
		Egginton W.I. AGM
		Whist Drive 7.30pm Frank Wickham Hall
Thu	18	10.00am Holy Communion at St Helen's
		Adelphic Club - The Right Reverend Bishop Peter Dawes
Tue	23	Etwall O.A.P.Social Club Table Games
		3rd Etwall Brownies Musical Fund Raising Evening, Methodist Schoolroom, open 6.30pm
		Etwall W.I. Home Economics - Quilling for Christmas.
Wed	24	Etwall Good Companions Club Hoy & Sales Table
		Egginton Jubilee Club meeting Memorial Hut 2.30pm
		Whist Drive 7.30pm Frank Wickham Hall
Thu	25	10.00am Holy Communion at St Helen's
		Etwall Methodist Womens Fellowship - U.S.A. Thanksgiving Day.
Fri	26	Well Dressing Assoc. Committee meeting 7.45pm Pavilion.
		Etwall Conservative Beef & Beaujolais night - Etwall Lodge, Willington Rd. 7.30pm
Sat	27	Etwall Primary School PTA Christmas Fayre
Tue	30	Etwall O.A.P. Social Club Table Games
DEC		
Wed	1	Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators meeting 7.30pm
		Etwall Good Companions Club Bingo
		Whist Drive 7.30pm Frank Wickham Hall
Thu	2	10.00am Holy Communion at St Helen's
		Burnaston Parish Council meeting 7.30pm
Sat	4	Etwall Village Playgroup Table Top Sale 10-12noon Frank Wickham Hall
		Age Concern Annual Christmas Tea 4pm for 4.15pm Etwall Primary School.

Appendix 3 Typical Week on the Need to Know Bus

DAY	CLIENT GROUP	ACTIVITIES
MONDAY AM: HILTON	- Small private housing estate - Young women wanting to return to work - Children	Introduction to 'back to Work' course looking at: - Personal Skills - Confidence Building - Work in the area - Letters of Application - Form Filling - C.V's
MONDAY PM: CHURCH BROUGHTON	- Mixed aged Group - Women & Men - Children	- Furniture Renovation - Library Facilities - Crafts, Gifts & Jewellry
TUESDAY AM: ROSLISTON (Small isolated village in a run-down coal mining area).	- Mixed Aged Group - All Women - Children	- Women on a Local Tapestry Project depicting life in a coal mining area. Working with other agencies.
TUESDAY PM: SWADLINCOTE (Meadow View) (Urban core of town in mining area).	- Group of Elderly people living in sheltered accommodation	- Library facilities, particularly large print. - Topical discussions Informally lead by worker - Games - word, number, thought provoking games - Crafts, needlework.
WEDNESDAY AM: Small village Poor Transport	- Mainly Women - 1 Unemployed man - Children	- Basic Computing with lap-top computers. - Small craft group in rear of bus.
WEDNESDAY PM: Large Council housing estate on outskirts of small mining town.	- Mixed Ages - Men & Women - Children	- Pottery and Candle-making making. - Training Access Point Worker (specifically requested). - Womens group developed from bus in this venue and moved into local premises.
WEDNESDAY TEATIME:	- Travellers - Men & Women	- One young man - help with reading & writing skills - Social activities, games, computers, friendship. Very sensitive work.
THURSDAY AM: ETWALL (on outskirts of city).	- Mainly women	- Basic cookery with young women with learning difficulties. - Basic English and Maths. - Crafts, pyrography & gifts.

THURSDAY AM:		
COTON PARK (Very isolated. Coal company owned. Very poor housing).	- Mixed Group - All Ages - Men, Women & Children	- Local group needing help to pressurise landlords into providing indoor toilets, bathrooms etc. General property improvements. Property developer planning to build on field nearby. Residents need a Community Room. Help with committee skills, letter writing, council procedures etc.
THURSDAY EVENING:		
WOODVILLE	- Young Women	- Girls work with the Youth Team
FRIDAY:	- MAINTENANCE, CLEANING, PREPARATION TIME, LIBRARY BOOK CHANGE, SHOPPING ETC.	

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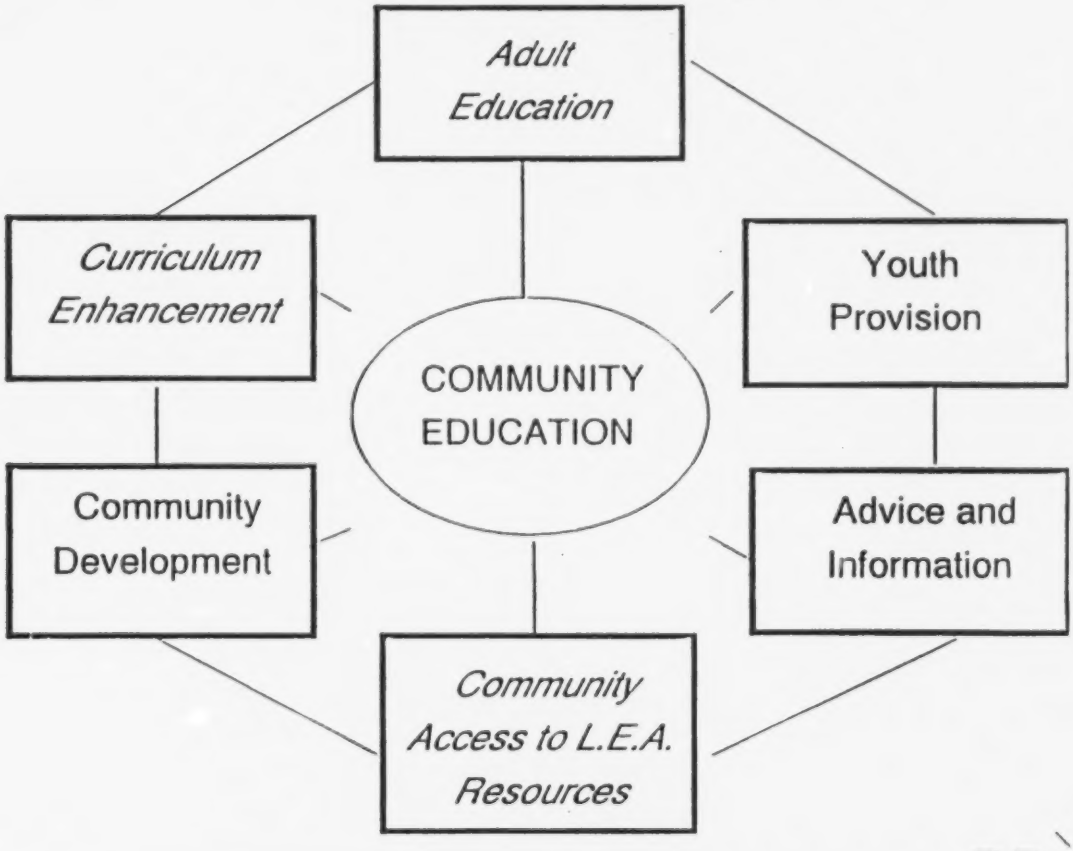
Figure 1

MANIFOLD VILLAGES COMMUNITY EDUCATION PROJECT



Staffordshire County Council

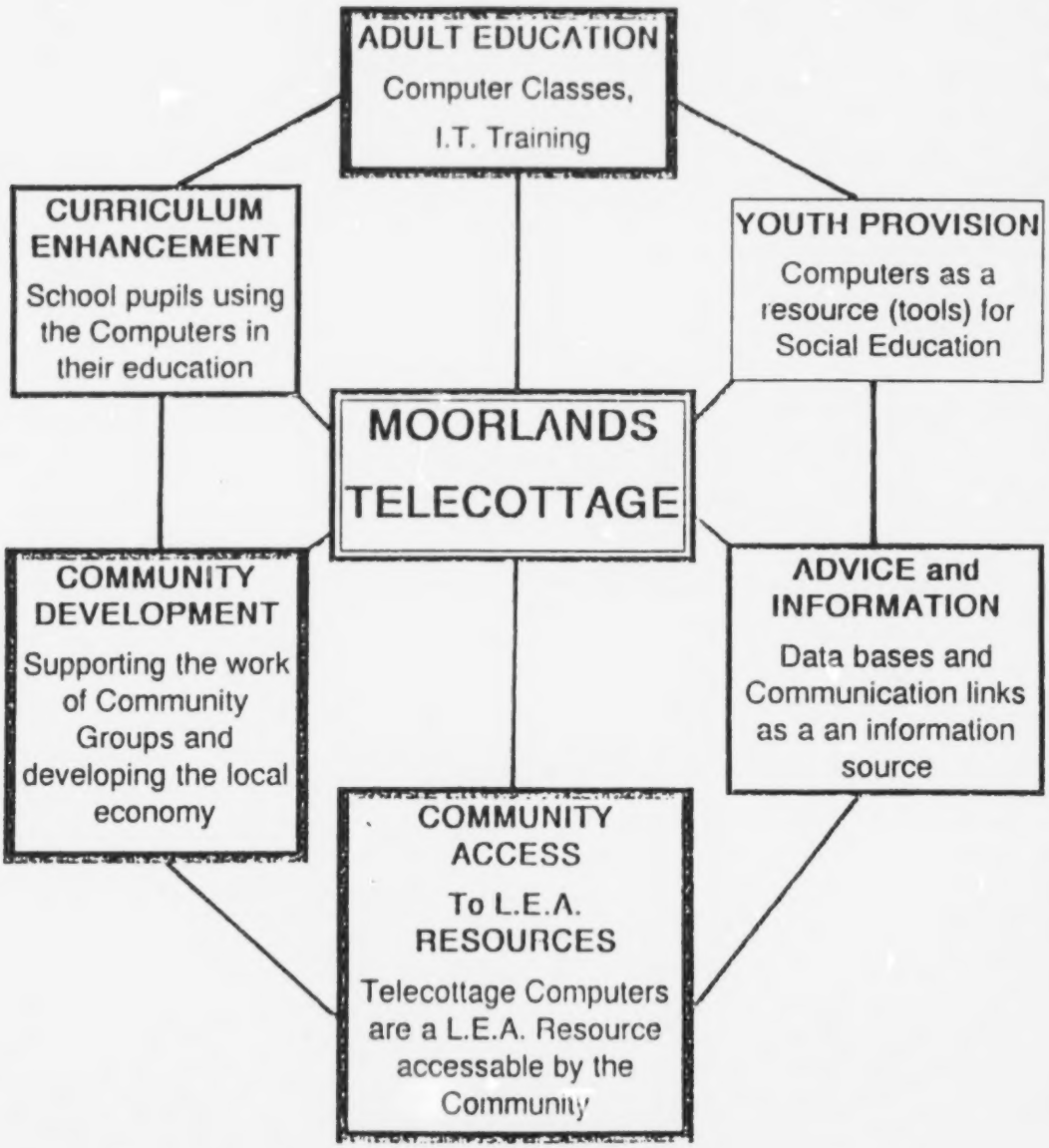
Education Department

Youth and Community

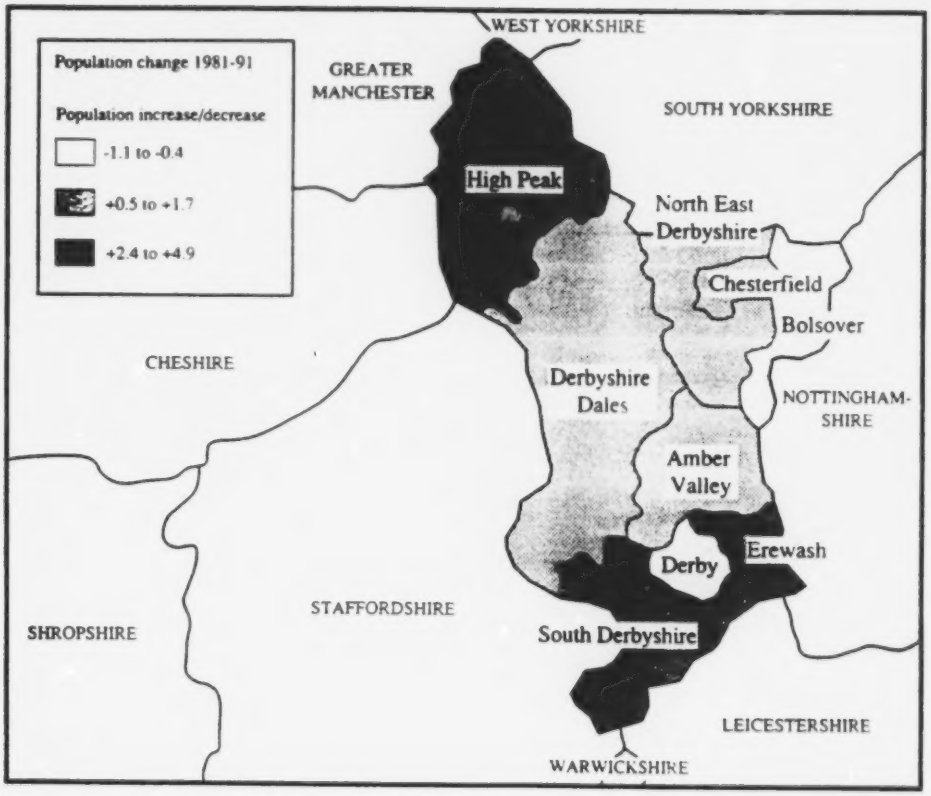
Figure 2

The Moorlands Telecottage as a tool for Community Education

Applied to the Warslow Model


ADULT EDUCATION
Computer Classes,
I.T. Training
CURRICULUM ENHANCEMENT
School pupils using the Computers in their education
YOUTH PROVISION
Computers as a resource (tools) for Social Education
MOORLANDS TELECOTTAGE
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
Supporting the work of Community Groups and developing the local economy
ADVICE and INFORMATION
Data bases and Communication links as a an information source
COMMUNITY ACCESS
To L.E.A. RESOURCES
Telecottage Computers are a L.E.A. Resource accessable by the Community

Map 1 **Percentage change in resident population (1981 population base) 1981-91: districts in Derbyshire**



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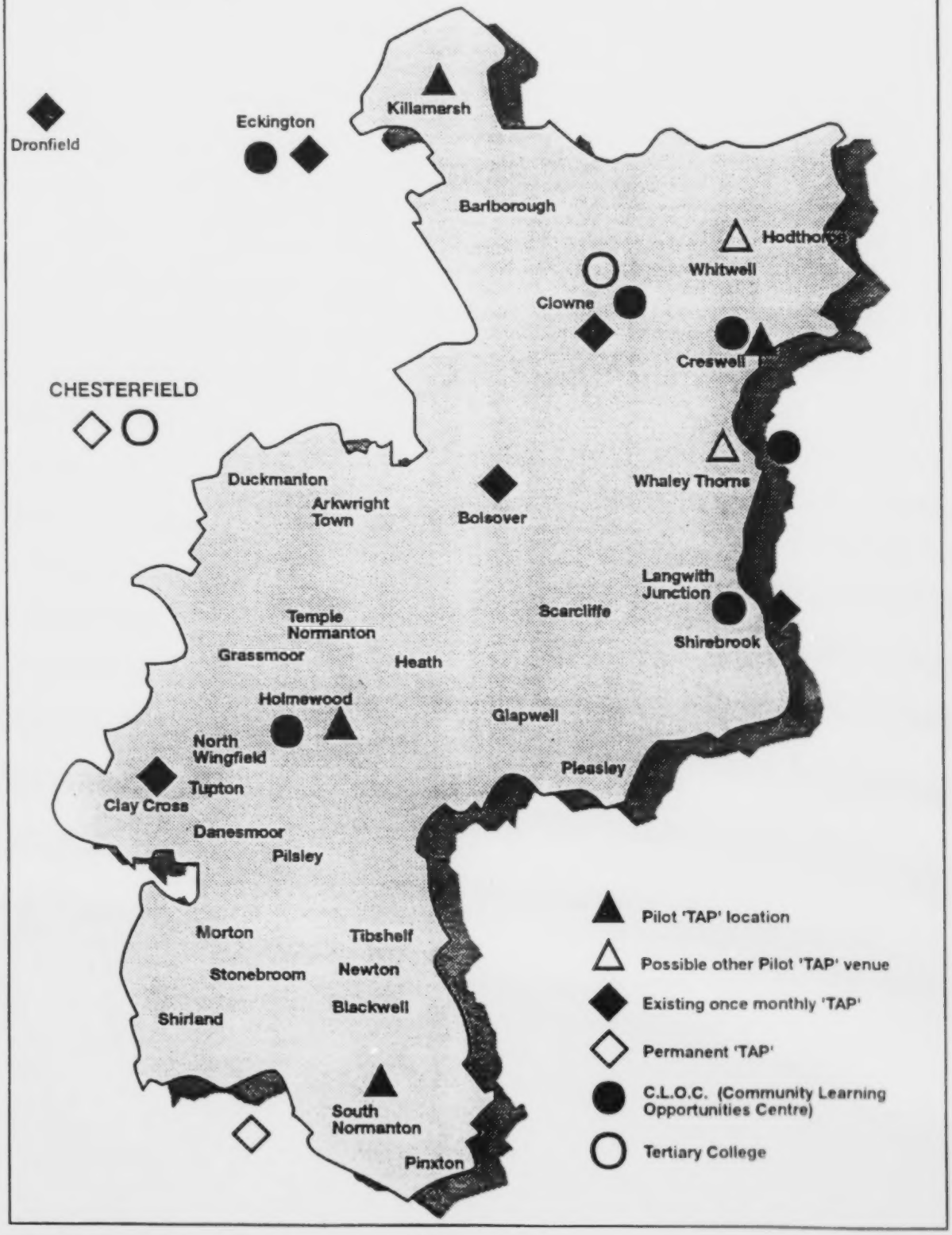
Map 2 Derbyshire Location Map

Map 3

North Derbyshire Coalfield Partnership Project Area



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Map 4

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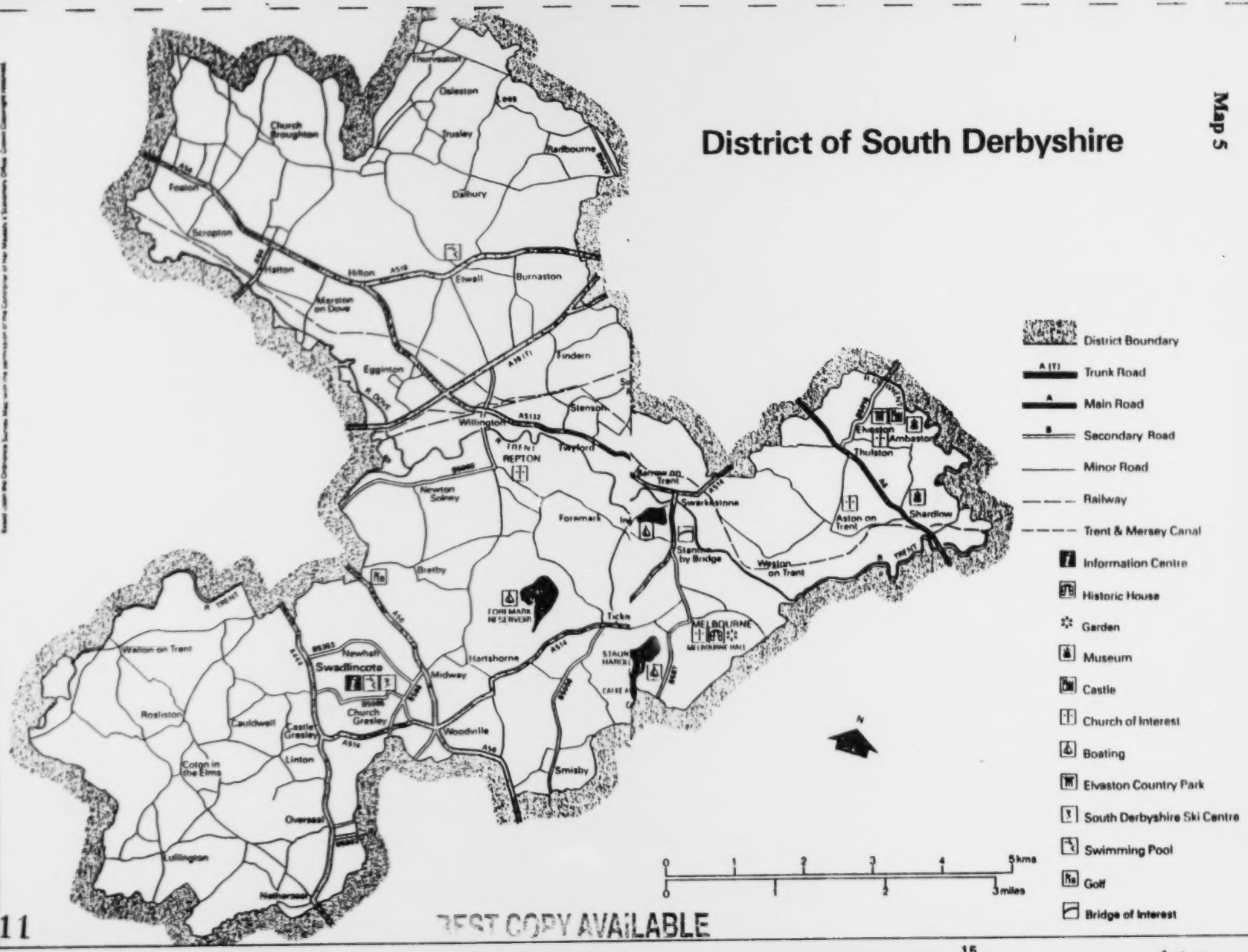
District of South Derbyshire

Map 5



- District Boundary
- Trunk Road
- Main Road
- Secondary Road
- Minor Road
- Railway
- Trent & Mersey Canal
- Information Centre
- Historic House
- Garden
- Museum
- Castle
- Church of Interest
- Boating
- Elvaston Country Park
- South Derbyshire Ski Centre
- Swimming Pool
- Golf
- Bridge of Interest

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Case Study 3

Cornwall

John Payne

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1. Introduction: Characteristics of Cornwall

Cornwall is a long way from most other places. It is a place of contradictions. On the one hand, its industries are as old as any in the country, with mining going back to pre-Roman times. On the other hand it is one of the most agricultural areas of England, with 9.2% of the labour force employed in agriculture, as against 2.6% nationally (the highest figure in England is 10.6% in Lincolnshire). It is a county with a clear sense of identity, including its own Celtic language (Cornish); yet many of the population are incomers, whether in search of retirement homes or alternative life-styles. Although many young Cornish people still go away "to England" in search of work, the population is increasing rapidly. There was a long period of stagnant or declining population from 1911 - 1939; the importance of Cornwall in wartime increased the population, there was a further decline 1951-1961, before the recent increase got under way (figure 1). The 1991 population was 460,000 (OPCS 1992). Recent increases have been especially significant in East Cornwall, where the opening of the Tamar road bridge has effectively turned this into part of the Plymouth commuter belt (map 2). It is also worth noting that the idea of a permanent retirement home is no longer as attractive to older people as it once was. Thus the population over 60 is expected to fall from 24.9% to 20.5% between 1985 and 2001, and the population under 17 to rise from 20.8% to 22.7% in the same period (cf table 1 of the East Sussex case-study report).

Unemployment in January 1994 was 12.8% in Cornwall, against a national average of 11.4%. Of the other south-western counties, only Devon (10.2%) reached double figures, with Gloucestershire 8.0% and Somerset 8.4%. As with national figures, there is now a significant difference between male and female rates, since many women are unable to claim benefit and therefore not counted, and also because of the tendency for full-time male jobs to be replaced by part-time female jobs. Thus male unemployment rates are two to three times as high as those for women. While male unemployment in individual Travel to Work Areas (TTWAs) in Cornwall varies between 8.2% in Truro and 17.8% in Newquay, it is above 20% in Falmouth, Newquay and Redruth/Camborne.

A further important point must be made about employment in Cornwall. Male wages are at the bottom, and female wages near the bottom, of national wage rates. These figures are a general reflection of the rurality of the county, but also of its geographical remoteness and the poor state of the economy. Fishing, mining, agriculture, ship-building - these are all among the crisis sectors of the UK economy. It is a peripheral economy made more peripheral by membership of the European Union. What remains to be seen is whether in the future it may prove able to exploit membership of the EU by developing a regional economic role in the wider context of north-western Europe. The development of new ferry routes based on Falmouth is an example of the possible future regional role of Cornwall within Europe.

The final general point to be made here is the way the "Cornish dimension" colours the difficult relations between "locals" and "incomers" which is a constant of studies of rural communities. There are different levels of both groups: during my field-work in Cornwall, I met people who had lived all their lives in Cornwall, people born in Cornwall but who had worked "up-country" and come back to retire, people born elsewhere who had worked all their lives in Cornwall, people attached to Cornwall by marriage and other relationship ties. I sensed a pressure to identify with a "Cornish dimension" which was fundamental to how the distinction between locals and incomers actually worked out at a local level. It is not so much a question of birth,

political allegiance or accent, but a question of recognising the specificity of Cornwall's current difficult position on the fringe of England, the UK, and Europe.

2. Methodology

As outlined in the first two case-studies in this series (East Sussex and Derbyshire), the main methods employed in this research are key respondent methodology and the collection of documentary evidence. Participant observation has played an increasingly important part in the Derbyshire and Cornwall case-studies.

Key respondent methodology

In this method of research, the researcher identifies key social actors in the field to be studied. They are contacted by phone and letter, and the purpose of the research explained to them. These contacts usually lead on to further suggestions of people whom the researcher should contact. It is a particularly appropriate method when the researcher needs to gather a relatively large amount of information in a short time, and where professional networks are in operation which can be accessed in this way. Its main drawback is that it over-emphasises formal learning opportunities rather than informal learning going on in organisations which may not see their primary role as educational, and the sort of informal learning which people do individually or in autonomous small groups. Even within the field of formal learning, it is likely to privilege the views of managers over those of "grass-roots" teachers and students. I shall return to this point later in this section.

The view of the Project Steering Group at the University of Sussex is that an integral part of key respondent methodology is the responsibility owed by the researcher(s) to the respondents. This is not just a matter of saying thank you! In each of the case-study areas, busy people have given up their time and energy not just to give interviews, but also to make quite complex arrangements for visits to classes and interviews with other colleagues and students. The circulation of this report acknowledged this commitment by feeding back to the respondents our views in draft form. This is not a published document, so it allows respondents to do three things before any material from the project enters the public domain:

1. to check the material for simple errors of fact
2. to give a view on the extent to which the analysis of the researcher corresponds to their experience as practitioners
3. to indicate any information of a sensitive variety which should be either omitted or disguised using conventions of anonymity.

This process is usually described as respondent validation.

Key respondents interviewed were:

Cornwall LEA Adult Education service: John Hall, Sue Butt, Margaret Bilkie, Bernice Kitching

Cornwall Rural Community Council: Andrew George

Cornwall Adult Basic Education service: Janet Anderson, Andy Connew, Gill Ahrens and Grace Keat

Cornwall College: Kate Atkinson

WEA: Gordon McCallum, Beryl Swanscoe (St Keverne branch), members of Boscastle branch

Cornwall Education Guidance Service: Rita Watkins and Mary McArthur

University of Exeter Department of Continuing and Adult Education: Ella Westland, Roger McGrady and Marianne Hester

I would like to thank all of them for their kindness and hospitality.

Documentary evidence

Primary sources included 1991 census data, up-to-date unemployment statistics from Cornwall County Council, documentary evidence on the council's Adult Education policies, a range of prospectuses and leaflets from educational providers and information on voluntary organisations whose activities include informal adult learning.

Secondary sources on Adult Education in Cornwall were less easy to find. However, the history of the WEA in Cornwall, edited by Gordon McCallum provided invaluable pointers both to the role of the WEA in Cornwall, and the distinctive flavour of adult education in the county more generally.

Participant observation

As in Derbyshire, the simple fact of staying in the area during the field-work meant that I was able to begin the process of delving beneath the surface of "professional" views of "what was going on". The report is coloured by the students and tutors I met and chatted to about their work and studies as I went round the county. Some of these are referred to directly at particular points in the case-study, while the views of others have perhaps had a more indirect influence on my own understanding of the role of adult learning in people's lives. The students and tutors I spoke to were working in a variety of different settings and organisational contexts:

- a WEA class in a private house in Falmouth
- the Open Learning Centre at Helston
- LEA evening classes at schools in Mullion and Bodmin
- the Links-into-Learning centre at Falmouth Marina
- a University of Exeter course at the W.I. Hall in Chacewater
- an informal meeting of the Boscastle WEA branch.

It has been my intention in this case-study to reflect as accurately as possible their experiences while taking account of the views of the organisers and my own growing understanding of the possibilities and problems of adult education in rural areas.

It is also important to record some of the omissions in this case-study. The Steering Group have accepted that it is not possible to account in detail for every kind of learning activity in each county. Thus there is no mention here of organisations such as the churches, or the W.I., which no doubt provide both formal and informal opportunities in Cornwall as they do in other rural areas. We hope that the final case-study, of North Yorkshire, will pay particular attention to these aspects of adult learning. The role of education and training for both individual and community development within the telecottage movement is not mentioned in this case-study, but was dealt with at some length in the Derbyshire case-study.

One significant shift within this project is the progressive abandonment of the micro-study technique. The original intention was to conduct a broad survey of each county and then comment in detail on one particular area within the county. In practice, it has become clear that such a detailed account of small areas would require considerably more resources than are available to the current project. Therefore what is offered in sections 5, 6 and 7 are three "case-studies within the case-study" of what I have described as "communities of learning"; each of these exemplify important points about adult learning in rural communities, but none of them would claim to be comprehensive in coverage.

3. Needs and providers

3.1 The Cornwall Education Guidance Service

While there are aspects of adult education which can be understood using a producer-consumer model, it has been long recognised that there are many barriers (practical, attitudinal and financial) which prevent potential students from gaining access to educational opportunities. Each of these has a "rural" dimension:

- as mentioned in the Derbyshire case-study, information is harder to come by in rural areas than urban areas
- unemployment, seasonal work and low pay mean a lack of financial resources to spend on education (especially if one takes transport and child-care costs into account)
- working-class people in rural areas have low expectations of their ability to change either their own circumstances or those of their community (Francis and Henderson 1992:22/3).

Thus the potential role of a permanently funded education guidance service is crucial in a rural area. The Cornwall Education Guidance Service (CEGS) was set up in 1988 through an Education Support Grant (ESG) and its funding subsequently taken over by the County Council:

> *The Service provides information, advice, counselling and support, enabling adults to return to or progress within education/training making informed choices and overcoming barriers. Working in partnership with providers and other organisations in education, guidance, information and training, the Service seeks to encourage closer networking between agencies.* (Information leaflet)

If the service is characterised by high ambitions ("Towards a learning society" appears as a motto on one of their publications), it also recognises that those ambitions can only be achieved by intensive work at a base level in local communities. In addition to regular sessions held at major population centres, other venues used include: community centres, job clubs, chapels, cafes, an RAF base and Citizen's Advice Bureaux. Another characteristic of their service is its recognition that the guidance function can be carried out in group settings as well as in individual interviews and contacts. Thus in 1992/93 1603 group contacts were reported, as against 2,357 individual appointment interviews and 2423 shorter contacts. 57% of clients were unemployed, and some 20% had no educational qualifications or only CSEs.

Since June 1993 the service has had ESF money, which enables it to do more proactive, developmental work. It has tried to target areas where there are no regular outreach spot, such as St. Ives, Hayle, St. Just, Looe, Callington and Calstock. "First-level information" (leaflets) are left in village shops and post offices. A proactive approach involves the Service in community development work which includes feeding back information to providers about unmet needs. In one unlikely spot, a mobile home encampment on a clay tip providing retirement homes for Midlanders as well as homes for local families with housing and other problems, the service was involved in facilitating sources of materials for people to build their own Community and Learning Centre, and has worked with other agencies, including two educational providers, one of which provided a free Committee Skills training course for the Residents Association (funded by CRS Ltd). A new feedback publication (*Reaching Adult Learners)* will give information to providers and other agencies, both within Cornwall and beyond, on client profiles, gaps in provision, barriers to access and so on. Three issues will further exemplify that CEGS is not just a link between potential students and existing provision, but a dynamic element in the development of adult learning opportunities in Cornwall:

Higher Education in Cornwall

25% of CEGS enquiries are about Higher Education, yet there is no higher education institution in Cornwall. Access to HE courses are groaning under the demand, although as we shall see below, access is a complicated procedure in Cornwall. CEGS played an important role in raising awareness in Cornwall of this problem, by providing statistical evidence which has informed discussion with all providers.. It also publishes a booklet giving details of how to access Higher Education from Cornwall (CEGS 1993).

U3A

The University of the Third Age (U3A) - a self-help social, leisure and learning organisation for older people - was facilitated in Cornwall by three agencies. CEGS played a leading role in researching and developing the groups, investigating in particular why some U3As in England were large and dynamic while others (even in major cities) had become small, closed social circles (thereby barring access to this form of education). Besides supporting the growth of the U3A groups in Cornwall, the CEGS worker was also able to suggest policies and structures which would encourage older people of all educational levels and backgrounds to use their local U3A branch. The Cornwall U3A forum continues to provide a structure for mutual support and exchange of ideas. By March 1993 there were 1200 members in 8 groups around the County (it is interesting to compare this with the 3601 "O.A.P." enrolments in the L.E.A. Adult Education service in November 1993). These groups are based on Penzance, Redruth,

Helston, Truro and Falmouth, Wadebridge, Looe, St Austell and Newquay. Clearly mobility is going to be a major factor in how far older people in the more rural areas can access these groups, and more data is required on this point. The role of an LEA worker in supporting this network is also suggestive for future relationships between the statutory and voluntary sectors.

Credit Unions

Although Credit Unions are less developed in the UK than in other countries (one quarter of Irish people belong to them), their recent growth has been spectacular - from 108 groups in 1987 to over 300 in 1992 (Weller 1993). Acquiring skills is integral to participation in a Credit Union:

> *Through involvement with Credit Unions, people find they grow in awareness and understanding of social and political issues. They see how people's lives are shaped by society and large institutions. They see how inequality is created within society and, moreover, they formulate ways to redress this. Also, Credit Unions offer members the opportunity to gain skills whether they are to do with running and managing an organisation, book-keeping, computing or relating to other people. These indeed may lead to opportunities in further education and employment.* (Donovan and Jones 1993:8).

At the same time, the acquisition of these skills is not easy. As Weller points out: "most volunteers are non-traditional adult learners who have previously rejected formal education" (Weller 1993:130). Weller emphasises that there has been little involvement of formal adult education providers in this work.

CEGS first became interested in Credit Unions because of recognition of the vital role of education and training in their development and running. Credit Unions provide an ideal opportunity not only for wider community development, but also for access to education and training for "non-traditional" adult learners. CEGS initiated the setting up of a county-wide Credit Union Steering Group in September 1993, to investigate their structured development in Cornwall and to obtain funding for a Development and Training Officer. CEGS staff chair and co-ordinate the work of the Steering Group and actively participate in writing and submitting funding bids to various bodies, including the Rural Development Commission and E.S.F.

This example also serves to illustrate a fundamental point in this research: distance in rural adult education is not just miles travelled, or even access to transport to travel those miles, but also a function of the cultural distance between segments of society which may co-exist in the same geographical area but be very different in terms of their previous experience of education and their expectations of how it might serve them as adults.

3.2 LEA Community Education in Cornwall

Current organisation

Until the incorporation of the colleges in 1993, LEA Community Education in Cornwall operated through a combination of a free-standing adult education service, and adult education staff operating within Further Education colleges. Further, the colleges have their own histories and identity; thus while they may share a legal status, they have different emphases. This means that the pattern differs within the six adult education areas in Cornwall: Penwith (Penzance

area); Kerrier (Helston, Camborne, Redruth); Carrick (Truro, Falmouth); Restormel (St Austell); North Cornwall (Bodmin, Wadebridge, Camelford, Bude, Launceston); Caradon (Liskeard, Saltash). Adult Education staff are based within the tertiary colleges at Penzance and Truro, in the St Austell College and its Saltash out-station, and in Cornwall College at Camborne/Redruth, the largest of these institutions. Only North Cornwall has no college at all. The colleges are contracted by the LEA to provide non-schedule 2 work, but the adult education staff are also responsible for organising some schedule 2 work, as will be exemplified later in this section. Free-standing adult education staff operate through schools, open learning centres and a variety of "community" settings, and provide a mixture of schedule 2 and non-schedule 2 work. Adult basic education will be considered separately in section 4. The county Schedule 2 work is submitted as a single county bid through one college used as a "post-box".

Total student[1] numbers at November 1993 were 18,569, i.e. 5% of the total population of the county over the age of 16. Enrolment figures show a steady progression from 6143 in 1980 to a peak of 19787 in 1991, since when the figure has declined slightly to its present level. Support for the service has been characterised by consistency rather than generosity, with no dramatic peaks or troughs. Many of the staff have been in place for some years, and there are strong bonds of loyalty between what one of the free-standing workers described to me as a "band of sisters". The emphasis was on maintaining the broadest possible political support; the other side of this particular coin was that there are also no clear policies for setting priorities. At the same time, the service must take account of the social characteristics of the county (seasonal work patterns; high unemployment; low pay), and an effort is made to cross-subsidise between profitable and less profitable areas of work. This has clear implications in the more rural areas, where the economics of service delivery are always marginal. While the view was put to me that there was a "survival mentality" within the service, there was also clear evidence of enthusiasm and innovation at a local level. For example in the Bodmin area (see also section 7), exactly 50% of enrolments were by new students who had not been studying in 1992/93.

Cornwall College

As has been mentioned, LEA adult education is provided through each of Cornwall's four colleges. Rather than comment in detail on each college, or attempt to generalise, consideration is focused here on LEA adult education provided through Cornwall College at Redruth / Camborne. Driving through on the main road, this feels more like a conurbation than rural England, yet the combination of industrial decline, high unemployment, low income and irregular public transport mean that it shares many features with more rural parts of the county.

Education for adults at Cornwall College is a separate department within the college, responsible for both schedule 2 and non schedule 2 work. Because of the low "weighting" given to part-time evening students in the past, vocational departments have not been especially interested in developing part-time evening work. However, this is currently under review in the light of the new FEFC funding regime, and a different pattern may emerge in the future. Whether this will be of benefit to adults is not clear. At the moment, the traditional "leisure" curriculum of adult education is complemented by subjects such as Word-Processing, Book-

[1] These figure are of course enrolments rather than individual people, and some allowance needs to be made for students enrolling on more than one course. However, since courses start throughout the year, a contrary allowance needs to be made for additional students who do not appear on the November statistics returned to the DfE. For example, the Bodmin area enrolments figure at January 1994 was 1505, compared with 1015 in November 1993.

Keeping, Computing and GCSE and "A" level subjects. Devolution of responsibility for this work to departments might lead to an increase in the amount of vocational course on offer, but is also like to prejudice the traditional leisure programme, which recent studies have shown acts as an important access point to adult learning for many adults, especially women (McGivney 1990).

There is also a strong sense that the operational priorities of adult education differ significantly from those of other parts of the Further Education system. Adult education organisers are concerned that they may lose the kind of freedom they have at the moment to use their budgets in the best interests of their local communities, for example to support minority interests or to ensure that at least some provision is closer to where people live than the main college site. There are four main issues which have to be satisfactorily addressed in any new structure:

1. **Location**: the current adult education programme is spread over 20 sites, including a dedicated adult education centre in Camborne which belongs to the college. Classes also take place in 13 schools, two churches, a village hall and a village church hall. There have been many more "rural classes" in the past, but outreach work is expensive and time-consuming, and fees relatively high in comparison with low wage rates in the area.

2. **Resources**: in looking at the use of public resources, from the point of view of adults, it is important that the full range of resources at publicly funded institutions should be available to them.

3. **Staffing**: currently the adult education programme is staffed by one full-time appointment plus about 120 part-time staff. These part-time staff bring a vast range of skills and backgrounds to the job, but need adequate support and training.

4. **Learning support**: there is currently no learning support structure within the college, yet evidence elsewhere suggests this is crucial to promoting access for adults who may have been away from study for many years. The county Adult Basic Education service is currently gathering information within the college to identify what sort of provision is needed.

Cornwall College also provides an Open Learning Centre, with packages available for Office Skills, Computing, and some GCSE subjects.

There is also an Institute of Cornish Studies, which acts as a research and documentation centre on cultural, historical, economic, social and planning issues.

The importance of Cornwall College as a provider of access and higher education courses is considered in the next section (3.3).

3.3 Higher education

As has already been pointed out, there is limited access to Higher Education in Cornwall. Given the tradition of students leaving home at 18 to attend university or college in another town this might not matter, though there is clear cause for concern in the exodus of well-educated young people from the county. However, for adults, the non-availability of higher education is crucial, especially for those who have limited access to private transport, and have family responsibilities. It can also be argued that higher education is an important factor in economic development, developing the local skills base, and complementing the research and development role of modern enterprises. The current proposal for a Lincolnshire University, organised in a decentralised way which takes full advantage of Information Technology, is an important precedent (*Guardian Education*, p.7, 1st February 1994). Lincolnshire has a similar-sized population to Cornwall (600,000 as against Cornwall's 460,000), scattered across a large area, a relatively large agricultural labour-force, high unemployment and low wage rates.

There are two specialist higher education institutions in Cornwall: Falmouth School of Art, and Camborne School of Mines (part of the University of Exeter, and sited on the Cornwall College site between Camborne and Redruth). However, this apart, it must be clearly stated that Cornwall does not have a Higher Education institution. Consequently, there is a very high demand for Open University places in Cornwall.

The University of Exeter Department of Continuing Adult Education has a base in Truro with permanent staffing and offers certificated courses which can be counted against the first year of a degree course or credited towards an O.U. degree. However, the subject range is limited, and only Humanities, Counselling and Local and Regional History really fulfil this function. There are difficulties too in how to promote the university's role in Cornwall. The Cornwall prospectus has a picture of the Exeter buildings on its cover, despite the fact that Exeter is 106 miles from Truro. Again, the centre's name (Hayne Corfe) gives no indication that this is an outstation of higher education. There is also real concern that an increasing emphasis on certificated courses and professional updating may alter the existing bias of the department's work away from women (and rural areas) and in favour of upwardly mobile male students in more urban areas. (Hester 1992).

Cornwall College provides access courses at Camborne/Redruth (60 students), and Helston (20 students), with plans to develop a group at Falmouth. Access courses are also provided at St Austell College. The University of Plymouth (ex-Polytechnic South-West) franchises its first year courses to both St Austell and Camborne/Redruth. At the latter there are options in Science, Social Science and Marine Studies. Access routes are to either University of Plymouth (for Science and Social Science) or to the College of St Mark and St John at Plymouth (affiliated college of the University of Exeter). The picture is further complicated by the fact that University of Plymouth provides B.Ed and Humanities courses on the Rolle College site at Exmouth. The geography of these routes is illustrated in figure 2. Readers of this report not familiar with the geography of the South-West peninsula might like to imagine access routes down the M4 corridor between London, Swindon and Bristol. A more realistic comparison, taking into account travelling times might be from Edinburgh to Aberdeen via Dundee!

The difficulties of access to higher education in Cornwall were highlighted for me by a visit to the access course at Helston, which offers access to Nursing and Social Science; subjects studied are Sociology, Psychology, Study Skills and Maths. The students, all but two of whom are women, come from a wide area between Penzance and Falmouth, and car-sharing is their

solution to travel problems. Several began by using public transport but abandoned it because of the time and difficulty involved. Access to library and computing facilities is a major problem. There is a college library on the Redruth/Camborne site, but this involves further travelling and does not always have the books they require. Public libraries are of little use to them. There are also problems in relations to finance: fees are paid, but there are no maintenance grants, and students on benefits have the usual well-known difficulties with the DHSS over the "availability for work" rule. As one student said: "How do you show you're looking for work if you're spending most of your time studying?" He asked why an access course could not be considered on a par with a government training course since neither offers a clear prospect of a job at the end of it. One woman I spoke to wanted to do a degree in Midwifery, but had been forced to abandon the idea: she has 4 children and a partner working in Cornwall; the nearest university that offers Midwifery is Bristol, who had turned her down, whereas Leicester had offered her a place. A system designed for 18 year olds can seem extremely unfriendly to well-motivated adults.

Access in Cornwall raises a number of insistent issues:

- In the absence of a proper higher education structure in Cornwall, access means access to courses which many of them will find great difficulty in studying, given the travelling and the knock-on effect on family responsibilities. It may also be access to a course which is not the student's first choice of study. For both these reasons a second chance can well become a second-rate chance.

- There is also the relationship between higher education and jobs, given the state of the Cornish economy: three or four years of study may not produce the expected personal benefits of secure, well-paid employment.

- Finally there is the unresolved question of the circumstances under which higher education "for its own sake", as an end in itself, should form part of the project of a civilised society. The hard fact is that without higher education as part of a project of regional economic regeneration, few adults in Cornwall are likely to have the opportunity to experience higher education as an end in itself.

4. Basic education in Cornwall

The challenge of providing a unified Adult Basic Education service across a large rural county at a time of rapid institutional and funding change is a daunting one. However, the advantages of a unified approach, with expert back-up and training, are quite clear. Adult Basic Education began in Cornwall as a 1-to-1 service in people's homes, using both volunteers and paid tutors. Despite the goodwill, it was a low quality service with few resources and little training. The process of change has involved setting up resource bases with suitable "adult" materials, which then became learning centres with students attending them. Thus at November 1993 there were only 13 home-based students (all with special needs) out of a total of 1560. ALBSU quality standards (appendix 1), including at least four hours direct tuition a week, are adhered to, but patterns of attendance vary. Thus in a town like Falmouth, attendance may be quite intensive, while in rural North Cornwall, attendance would be less frequent, with students working at home and coming to the centre for tutorials.

The service operates predominantly through the 18 Link Into Learning Centres. Some of these centres are in schools and colleges, but others are in libraries, a health centre and in office premises. There are also a number of other formats within which ABE operates, for example "Link into Training", which is TEC / ESF funded work with unemployed people, and "Community Liaison and Community Outreach" which offers "support for basic skills improvement within the community, adapted to the setting and purpose of the group concerned." (internal document).

The budget has grown from £30,000 in 1987 to £500,000 in 1994. There was concern about the nature of some of the output-related, accreditation-driven funding available to ABE. This refers to funding where some money is held back for evidence of accredited outcomes. This is seen as not a problem where the student wants accreditation, but is potentially a major ethical problem where, for example, a student comes in to improve her reading and is obliged to take a "Wordpower" assessment for funding rather than educational reasons. The situation is complicated still further if the funding is linked to a qualification which is beyond the capacity of the student to achieve. At the same time, the external funding is seen as critical to the success of a service in a rural county where economies of scale can seldom be counted on. For example, it had been decided to go ahead with volunteer training for 6 people at Bude on the north coast, although 12-15 was the normal figure for such training courses. Travel is a problem for many students wanting help with basic skills. Students on TEC schemes are paid travelling costs, but a variety of other methods are used to support learners: for example, volunteer tutors are paid a mileage allowance and this can be extended to include offering lifts to isolated students.

There are some specifically rural aspects to provision. For example, it was discovered that many farmers had difficulties with the increasing amounts of paperwork required by the Department of Agriculture and the EU. Some specific work was done on this in North Cornwall. The county co-ordinator regretted that this requirement had not been identified at an earlier date: "if we'd known it was going to happen in advance, we could have gone out and promoted it." "Rising to the Challenge" courses offer support to community groups in rural areas where people are reluctant to take on roles in voluntary organisations, for example Maths for treasurers, oral skills for chairs, written skills for secretaries.[2]

Development work has recently taken place in colleges, where traditionally ABE has not been located. A pilot project at St Austell / Saltash was set up to support learning needs across the college. At Saltash this has led to a joint college / ABE appointment, using a room on the edge of the college site which is also available to local community groups. A similar development will take place at St Austell.

Cornwall is also the site of an ALBSU Basic Skills at Work development project (cf the Derbyshire and East Sussex case-study reports). The 12 month funding is seen as very short for a development project, but the Devon and Cornwall TEC has stepped in to continue funding into a second year, and this form of provision looks set to become a regular part of the work. Clients have include several factories, a health authority, the Social Services Department of Cornwall County Council, and the retail trade. Care and Hotel / Leisure courses are scheduled. The emphasis is on communication and interpersonal skills, though the retail work, aimed at

[2] This work is comparable to development work undertaken by the Rural Community Council in East Sussex. Cornwall RCC places rather less emphasis on training.

shop assistants working in small retail outlets, has also stressed Maths skills. Of particular importance here is the close involvement of the LEA service in promoting basic skills training in areas of work such as retailing, care and hotel / catering. Individual employers (or work units) tend to be small and management do not necessarily have the expertise to make this sort of commitment to basic skills training without external support.

The curriculum of Adult Basic Education is very varied, and starts from a lengthy assessment of individual needs. It may include oral and written communication and numeracy skills. Computers are used to support learning, but on certain TEC-funded schemes Computer Literacy is also included. This emphasis on individual student needs may make considerable demands on tutors, especially in rural areas The co-ordinator gave the example of a small rural centre with one ESOL student - the wife of the local doctor; but the next ESOL student to turn up (in a county where 99.5% of the population were classified as white European in the 1991 census) might well be a person illiterate in her own language.

Falmouth Link into Learning

As an adult education researcher, I am used to seeing adult education taking place in curious settings. Falmouth was my introduction to adult education in a yachting marina. The growth of this particular Link Into Learning Centre has been remarkable. Only 3-4 years ago it was a poorly resourced, part-time centre using primary school materials to teach adults to read. It is now open 40 hours a week and is used by up to 500 students. Even more remarkably, the centre does not advertise. Students come by word-of-mouth or by referral (e.g. by the Job Centre). "Sympathy" has been replaced by "empathy" in approaching students. Everyone who works in the centre has personal experience of unemployment, and "academic" qualifications are not sought. On the other hand, there is a strong emphasis on staff training. The marina site was chosen as offering as great a contrast as possible with "school"; it is also on the main bus-route between Falmouth and Penryn, and students coming in (mainly by car) from outlying villages do not have to drive through the town.

The Falmouth area is one of high unemployment, although the outlook is not totally bleak. For example, ship-repairing (unlike ship-building) is still a viable industry, and there is talk of opening a new ferry service to the north of Spain. New road schemes, some with EU funding, are in the offing, together with expansion of retailing. However, employers can pick and choose carefully, and unemployed people who want to get back into work must be prepared to work for qualifications in order to do so. Work experience is part of the Link Into Training Bonus scheme, which offers trainees benefit plus £10 per week. Links have been established with 60 local employers and trainees are often taken on as employees following work experience. While this can be seen as simply smoothing out some of the bumps in the local labour market, offering employers the opportunity to test out employees before making the commitment of taking them on full-time, it is also making a contribution to the up-skilling of the labour force.

The Centre offers a number of rooms with contrasting atmospheres. The main space is a social area where individual work is combined with a lot of chat and tea and coffee drinking. There are several small quiet rooms for small group work or individual study, and a large computers room where students are occupied on individual tasks. It was significantly difficult to spot who were the students and who the tutors, especially as the paid staff are supplemented by volunteer tutors.

ESOL

The number of ESOL students at Falmouth is relatively small, but includes refugees, seamen, art students, au pairs, restaurant workers and partners from other countries. Because of low numbers, tuition is usually 1-to-1, though sometimes 1-to-2 or 3, using a combination of paid and volunteer tutors. More active promotion of ESOL is being considered. While EFL students tend to be given more structured course work, ESOL students receive more individualised treatment. Currently, no distinction is made between the two groups from an administrative point of view, though the setting up of EFL courses in colleges is under consideration. It did seem anomalous to find full-time students at Falmouth College of Art, or au pairs, being offered free tuition alongside refugees. The development of ESOL in Cornwall is supported by the ALBSU special development project "Developing ESOL in non-traditional settings", based at the Gloucester College of Arts and Technology.

Summary

Overall, the achievements of the Cornwall ABE service are impressive. However, there is still concern that very large numbers of people who might benefit from this service are not coming forward. If adults experiencing literacy and numeracy problems in their working or home lives is reckoned to be 13% of all adults (Hamilton 1987), then this would suggest a figure of about 49,000 for Cornwall. There are currently 1,560 ABE students, or about 3% of those who might be expected to benefit. I believe this begins to place Cornwall's success in the light of the national failure to deal with the problem of far too many young people leaving school without the skills to equip them for the 20th century, let alone the 21st.

5. Communities of Learning? 1. Helston and the Lizard

Introduction

Population figures:	Helston	10,900
	Mullion	2,100
	St Keverne	1,900

This area contains only one small town (Helston), a number of medium sized villages and the Royal Naval Air Service base at Culdrose (map 3). Holidaymakers who have visited this most southerly corner of England would find it hard to imagine in a January gale blowing unopposed across a landscape of fields and heath, stunted trees and low slate-roofed cottages. It is also an area of contradictions. On the Helston - St. Keverne road, each mile is marked off by stone mile-posts, yet the road is dominated for much of the way by the giant golf-balls of the Goonhilly Down satellite communication station. At another point on the road, I passed a group of County Council workmen with their traditional long-handled "Celtic" shovels; round the next bend is a wind-farm.

Helston Open Learning Centre

This is a small building on the Helston School site, which also plays host to the Helston Sports Centre. The same building also houses a non-profit nursery set up by the school governors. The main groups of users are navy families, school teachers and adult students (in that order).

Open Learning is a response to the economics of adult education provision in rural areas: an attempt to make provision for small numbers of people keen to learn a particular subject but insufficient to justify a course. At the same time, just as I commented critically on the total

numbers of people likely to benefit from ABE, it is also clear that these small numbers are also a function of the reluctance of probably 90% of the population of Cornwall (as elsewhere in the country) to participate. If only the barriers were **not** there (money, child-care, transport, cultural conditioning, school failure) ... but they **are** there, and Open Learning enables at least a few more to participate.

The centre is open from 9.30 - 2 on Mondays to Thursdays, and the main users are women returners, with word-processing accounting for a lot of the enrolments. Some students have enrolled in evening classes, but come in during the day to supplement their class. Places are booked on a week-by-week basis, and students pay £1 an hour on a pay-as-you-learn basis (the standard adult education class rate is £1.30 per hour, 90p for concessions). The decision to peg charges at this figure was taken to attempt to reduce costs for people such as the wives of farm workers, who are not well off, but not on benefits. The funding is entirely LEA. Students can also study "O" and "A" level subjects through the National Extension College flexistudy system, but numbers are low: about 15 in comparison with about 100 in Computing subjects. In addition, drop-out rates are high, and where possible the organiser tries to direct people into standard classes (this includes the possibility of joining school groups at Helston and Mullion schools). Other packages such as languages (including Cornish) are recommended as back-up to classes rather than a replacement. In general the approach of the centre is to keep things small-scale and collaborate with other institutions and services wherever possible. This is exemplified in the Association of Accounting Technicians NVQ level 2 course which combines home-study, work-based learning, attendance at Cornwall College and support through the Open Learning Centre.

In addition there are a number of group sessions run at the Open Learning Centre:

- informal conversational language groups
- food hygiene to obtain certification meeting the requirements of the Food Safety Act. This is especially useful for women involved in W.I. markets and in the seasonal holiday trade (bed-and-breakfast, cafes etc)
- Make your Experience Count, an Open University package for assessment of future options. This is currently run as a free course, but an application has been made for validation with the South-West Access Federation, so that eventually it can be run with FEFC funding. The students are mainly women.
- the Access course referred to in section 3.3, above.

Evening classes at Mullion

The adult education programme in the area is concentrated on the two modern schools at Helston and Mullion. However, there is also use of other local schools, two farms (one for Art, the other for Craft workshops), a private house, a hotel, a Community Centre, a church hall and, of course, the Open Learning centre.

Mullion is a busy village some 7 miles from Helston. Mullion Cove is a well-known tourist spot, but the village sits back from the sea, a tightly clustered collection of houses. The school

is a modern building on the outskirts of the village and serves most of the villages on the Lizard peninsula. The range of classes offered here is fairly typical of LEA adult education: Art, Crafts, D.I.Y., Computing and Word-Processing, Typing, Keep Fit, Radio Amateurs, Massage, Languages. These are all held at the school. In addition, a Keep Fit over 50 class meets in the British Legion hall on Thursday mornings.

I visited two classes: D.I.Y. and a self-defence group:

D.I.Y.

The class takes place in a well-equipped school workshop. The tutor is a school-teacher who took early retirement. Most of the students are from the surrounding villages, and most have come by car. Their individual stories reveal the complexities of adult motivation within a single class, and the complexity of the notion of "locals" and "incomers" when one attempts to apply it in a reductionist way to a particular social setting. The only Mullion person in the group is an older man who has lived here for 35 years and is married to a local woman. He describes a moderately active village life based on groups such as the church (mainly older people), the chapel (including an active "Young Wives" group), the British Legion, the Residents Association and an active branch of the Old Cornwall Society (an organisation referred to in more detail in section 6) which organises meetings and outings. He feels that the main group who keep themselves to themselves are the retirees - people who have retired into the area and don't have family connections with it. An older woman learning wood-turning was born in Cornwall, went away to teach and has returned to retire; her grown up children live in London. With two other older people, they constitute a wood-turning sub-group within the larger class. A young man is keen to get into the building trade, and specialise in windows. His first effort is for his mother's house. His mate is a farmer who shares his ambitions. He works a small farm, has a wife and three young children, and needs a supplementary source of income. But they are both conscious of the number of small businesses in the area going bust, so this is a very tentative exercise at the moment. This view of the local economy corresponded with my own survey of the Job Centre in Helston High Street - no full-time jobs, some government training schemes, part-time jobs paying £2.60 - £3.50 per hour, with most of them clustered in the £2.80 - £3.00 range. The local Theme Park, which has been "reported" to the Low Pay Unit for its rates, is advertising already for part-time summer staff.

Self-defence

This is a new initiative at Mullion. It had been tried before, but there were insufficient students to make it financially viable. The current arrangement is that adult education pays for the hall, the tutors are 3 male police officers and the class is free to the students. Most of the women are younger women from Mullion and Lizard, but there are also some older women who came after the officer in charge (a self-defence instructor in the police) gave a talk to the Mullion W.I.

It is hard to untangle the reality of violence against women in a rural area from the impact of the media, and the way isolated incidents get blown up. The adult education organiser herself has been asked whether driving around country lanes at night carrying enrolment fees doesn't make her nervous, and has noticed that women students who come into Helston and Mullion for evening classes normally do so in pairs. At the same time, these isolated incidents reported may well only be the tip of the iceberg in terms of low-level harassment of women in a number of situations. Only a sensitive woman researcher with plenty of time to spare would be likely to

get to the bottom of that issue. It is clear that the 30 women who have signed up for these classes perceive a threat to their safety. Practical work is combined with discussion of situations of threat to safety that might arise. The overall aim is to make women a little more wary, but also to give them confidence in dealing with situations that might arise.

In addition to the question of the reality of danger to women in rural areas, the other related issue that arises is why the class is not specifically labelled as being for women. Indeed one man has enrolled. Would labelling the group more clearly as women's self-defence clarify its purpose, or would it deter women who might then identify this with "feminist" positions they did not share?

The class is also a good example of collaborative use of resources in rural areas, where adult education is more the "art of the possible" than in urban areas. At the same time it raises other questions about how far current financial regulations restrict adult learning. In an area of low pay and often irregular employment, it is highly significant that the class has succeeded primarily because it is free. At the same time, there are difficulties even for the police in making their resources available, and it is not clear why accounting structures demand a payment to be made for what is a public building. If a subject such as self-defence is identified as a social priority, one might well expect payment to come from police budgets as part of their civil role. In the same way, courses on health issues (both personal and public: sewage disposal and the state of beaches are live issues in Cornwall) might come from Health Authority budgets, courses on diversification for farmers (or form-filling!) from Ministry of Agriculture budgets and so on. The role of an adult education service as a link between these learning needs and the funding agencies would still be important, but the adult learning implications of a range of local and national government work would be recognised. This point is taken up again in section 8.

Affiliation schemes and financial barriers to access

The final point in relation to adult education in this corner of Cornwall is that a method has been found to finance small classes, though at the expense of the tutor. This involves formalising the practice which I mentioned in the East Sussex case-study of paying the tutor a lump sum from the fees of students who do actually come to enrol. County Hall acknowledges this, though not surprisingly the auditors are not keen. As I mentioned in relation to East Sussex, much organiser time and effort is taken up in achieving solutions of this sort, energy and time which is not then available for outreach and development work. It is deeply ironical that a much lower fee would make it impossible to run a scheme of this sort, yet lower fees might well attract far more students, especially in a county where low pay is such an enormous social problem. As in much of England, the overall participation rate is about 5%; if this were increased to even 10%, for example, then at least some of the problems of providing a reasonable range of courses might be avoided.

St Keverne: the WEA and the 5 villages project

St Keverne is an isolated village 11 miles from Helston which is the site of an innovative WEA project, which will also be mentioned in section 7. This was developed jointly by the WEA and the Rural Community Council (CRCC), who put in a small amount of money. Each "side" has its agenda.

The WEA has a long history of innovative work in Cornwall (McCallum 1993), characterised by a tradition of inter-agency collaboration which perhaps reflects the solidarity induced by the sense of separateness from (the rest of) England. It has a larger programme than the University of Exeter (though there is considerable joint work), and the number of classes has risen considerably in recent years through drawing in external funding. For example, Health Authority money was initially used to fund an impressive range of Lip-Reading and Sign Language classes for the Hearing Impaired. This funding is now the responsibility of the Local Authority. Despite the fact that much of the work has been generated by the full-time staff, the branch structure is relatively vigorous (no doubt encouraged by the generally high profile of the WEA in Cornish adult education) but developing it is seen as a priority.

Village work is a problem for the WEA in Cornwall. It is possible to put effort into developing liberal education classes in villages, but the likely beneficiaries are going to be retired people (whether local or incomers) whose occupational pensions may be higher than average local wages. Additionally, such classes may develop into inward-looking "clubs", indifferent or even hostile to new members and new ideas. Poor people in rural areas are more likely to want access - whether to academic or vocational skills - but fee levels and transport problems make it difficult to make this sort of provision. There is thus a contradiction between the traditional purposes of the WEA and the existing curriculum. The 5 villages project is an attempt to address this problem, by looking to the voluntary base and curriculum range of WEA activities, though the WEA organiser recognised that it had an element of "tilting at windmills."

The RCC view of the Five Villages project emphasised that the setting up of local branches would not just foster individual personal development, but would contribute to the overall life of local communities, and to creating an organisation that could stand alongside (e.g.) the Parish Council or W.I. as a proactive force in village life. In the event, one village dropped out almost immediately, two others have produced partial successes or failures (depending on whether you contrast the present position with what didn't exist in the past or with the broad aims of the project). The other two, St Keverne, which is considered in this section, and Boscastle (section 6) have been successes but raise a number of broad issues.

The WEA branch in St Keverne operates by keeping its collective ears close to the ground, and takes a particular interest in the unique geology and wild-life of the Lizard peninsula. It has worked closely with both the County Council's Lizard Peninsula Projects Officer and the Cornwall Trust for Nature Conservation. A key activity has been free guided walks, attracting around 40 people, led by geologists, naturalists and so on. Other activities have included courses on local history and current affairs. The point at which this begins to diverge from a "normal" LEA programme is First Aid, which is a response to interest from parents of young children and those looking after elderly relatives, or people who've witnessed accidents and simply want to know "what to do in an emergency". Some small groups (e.g. Embroidery, French) which have not taken off as classes meet in people's houses. Given the way these subjects begin to encroach on the traditional adult education curriculum, it is not surprising that a point of conflict arose over a Drawing class which the WEA group was advertising in St Keverne and which clashed with the only LEA class (Painting) being held in the village. Yet goodwill also exists: the St Keverne WEA programme was advertised in the Helston area Adult Education prospectus.

At the same time, a branch officer felt that the people who came were rarely "local people", were middle-aged or older and often retired. People express an interest, but at the end of the day, don't turn up to events and courses: the work of the branch is seen as something imposed

from outside rather than an organic growth from within. It is as if a hard-working and well-motivated group has not yet found an issue to focus on which is of wide concern. To put it another way, different "communities" within the community are talking to one another but have not yet found something they really want to talk about! One possibility which relates to the group's existing interest is pollution. Pollution of beaches and inshore waters, for example, is of interest to people who work in inshore fisheries or in the tourist trade, as much as those whose primary interest in the seashore is aesthetic or scientific. Since this problem is also of the concern to the County Council it might also be a way of pulling in further financial support.

The notion of how such a local voluntary group might develop as a focus for adult education activities from a number of providers is further explored in section 8 of this report.

6. Communities of Learning? 2. Chacewater

Driving from Camborne through the Cornish mining belt to Chacewater, past the crumbling engine houses where Cornish engineers developed technology which was at the cutting-edge of the Industrial Revolution, I listened to Radio Cornwall. Only 15% of jobs in Cornwall are now in manufacturing; 51,000 jobs have been lost since 1991. Chacewater is not at all what one expects a Cornish village to be like: in the dark I drove through it and had to turn round and come back again. The houses hug the narrow main road; the class which I am visiting takes place in the W.I. Hall, a genuine Nissen hut located in the village car-park. For much of the evening it takes places to the accompaniment of loud music from a car stereo outside. Its church was built in 1828 rather than in the Middle Ages. The population was 6,000 in the 1850s before the crash of world copper prices; it is now 1,600. Quite a few local people worked at the recently closed Wheal Jane mine five miles away. The village is thus enduring the painful transition from mining village to dormitory village for Truro and Redruth / Camborne. At the same time there are plenty of local organisations: sports clubs, the WI (with their own hall), the Old Cornwall Society (OCS), a playgroup, a drama group, several older people's groups meeting at the Village Hall, a primary school and horticultural show. It was frustrating not to be able to spend more time in the village and have time to map out the membership of these different groups. Nor to be able to pursue the Carnival Committee which puts on events throughout the year and distributes grants to village organisations, much like the Well-Dressing Associations referred to in the Derbyshire case-study.

One of the ways in which a village can deal with change is by examining its roots, and the changes that have taken place in the past. This Local History class, organised by the University of Exeter, had taken place the previous year at Newlyn East, but two-thirds of the class had come from a distance. One of them was from Chacewater and suggested the possibility of moving the class here.

The focus of interest in Chacewater is the OCS, and 7 of the 10 students are from the village. This is an organisation set up in the 20s to record the disappearing history of Cornwall, including the Cornish language, the Cornish dialect of English, folklore and aspects of local history. It has 45 branches in Cornwall. Some have "degenerated" (a term used by a member, not by me!) into social clubs, but others still actively pursue their original function. Both the Chair and Secretary of the OCS are in the class. Apart from their usual programme of speakers and entertainment, they are planning an exhibition of local history in March 1994. The Local Studies Library in Redruth is helping, and they are interested in oral history methods -

preserving the memories of older villagers. The exhibition is also linked to the 60th anniversary of the Parish Council (1934-94).

Thus the class has changed from its initial description in the University of Exeter brochure: "This is a course to help beginners in local history. It will include an introduction to sources on the history of houses and their sites, on where to find the sources and how to interpret them." While the tutor is acknowledged as the expert in how to locate and use historical resources, she in turn responds to the particular interests of the groups. She makes suggestions as to possible items that might be included in their exhibition, but local knowledge is respected; the suggestion that a particular Lord be invited to open the exhibition is greeted with laughter: "I don't think the village would turn up" is one comment I hear. Reference is made to aspects of the history of the immediate area. One of the main items on the evening of my visit was wills, and she had brought along as an example the will of J. Hornblower, an engineer who came from Bromsgrove to work on the Newcomen engines in the mines, and stayed. It is an ironical comment on the 20th century Midlanders who come to Cornwall for their summer holidays or to retire!

The social composition of this class is of considerable interest. Despite their interest in local matters, one confides to me that "Quite frankly we're all incomers." In the sense that they do not represent the indigenous working-class (e.g. tin miners, farm labourers etc) this is perfectly true. Yet there is a clear identification with the locality. One woman has come to the course from Newquay because her family originated in the village. Several people have retired to Cornwall, but have chosen to live in this workaday village rather than the prettier, better known places on the coast; they include a couple very active in the OCS whose ancestors were Cornish. Several have married Cornish wo/men. In so far as they acknowledge a "Cornish dimension" to life in Cornwall, they fit the view I received from the RCC worker of what "being Cornish" amounted to.

A visit to this class confirms the views of a number of people I met in Cornwall that certificated courses may attract one sort of new students, but that other "new students" may require something very different, much more informal and much more directed at other aspects of life such as creative leisure and community development. It also confirmed for me that active incomers to a village may want to do more than simply take over village institutions and organisations for their own purpose, but that they need particular skills to promote activities in ways which include "the locals" as well. Involving the school and the use of oral history, both of which ideas came up during the evening, are two possible avenues they may pursue in the future.

7. Communities of Learning? 3. Camelford, Bodmin and Boscastle

Even within Cornwall, North Cornwall is regarded as remote. This section covers only one part of "the North" - the triangle of country stretching north from Bodmin and Wadebridge to Camelford and Bude, bounded to the west by the sea and to the east by the highlands of Bodmin Moor which rises to 419 metres at the tor of Brown Willy.

LEA provision at Bodmin Community College (including the Community College Centre)

Bodmin School and Callington School (East Cornwall) are the only two schools in the county designated as "Community colleges", and there are some non-typical features of provision in Bodmin. There are a number of strands, which are comprehensively described in a well-printed newsletter which includes details of the different kinds of provision and courses.

1. Bodmin Community College accepts adult students into A level, GNVQ and GCSE within the 6th Form. There are some social facilities for adults, and childcare (in a nursery used by school staff and local women as well).

2. The Community College Centre in the centre of town, opened in 1987 . This provides a range of keyboard and computing classes, academic subjects such as English, Maths, History, an Access course and open learning facilities. It began life as an Open Learning Centre, but was later transferred to the control of the school. Now the stress seems to be more on community access than open learning. The premises are shared with the CAB and Age Concern, while the school use it for a parent drop-in centre, and the Parent-School Association for their weekend shop and events.

3. Link into Learning runs ABE provision at the Community College Centre on three sessions a week.

4. Adult education evening classes. There is no adult education office at the Community College, so the organiser (based in Camelford) goes from room to room checking that all is well. Although this works in practice for tutors and existing students, it does mean that there is no-one to talk to the casual caller.

The newsletter referred to above emphasised for me that one of the greatest barriers to participation, and one which cannot be ignored in a study of this kind, is the willingness of the state to finance essential structures for supporting adult learning. I have quoted in full an article that appeared on the inside front page (1993):

> *Bodmin Community College was singled out recently in a series of four National conferences for its work in providing opportunities for local people of all ages. 206 adult students enrolled at our Centre last year with an impressive list of successes, mainly jobs or higher qualifications. A further 30 adults study with the sixth form. Yet in March this year, we were fighting for our lives as the County Council proposed cuts that would have shut the Centre, preventing students from even sitting their exams. A compromise was cobbled together after demonstrations and appeals to Councillors were mounted by students and staff alike. The strength of feeling enabled 650 names to be collected on a petition inside a week and a coach load of placards bombarded County Hall!*
>
> *The compromise reached was a 50 per cent cut in funds this year, tapering to nearly nothing in April 1994. One outcome has been slicing*

in half (the) Community Tutor post, the irony being that much of her work had been developing relevant courses and supporting adults who've returned to learn. The college has been desperately trying to bridge the gap by finding alternative funding. A partnership is developing with Cornwall College to draw in government funds. European funding is also being sought though this takes time.

In the meantime, the government's public spending cuts are likely to be even more savage giving the new County Council, with its Liberal Democrat majority since May 1993, massive headaches. Our plea would be that Bodmin should not be written off. Bodmin has been hammered enough and its people shouldn't be further disadvantaged by taking away locally available education and training opportunities. We believe we provide high quality teaching responding to local needs. It's a price worth paying ... and fighting for!

As at February 1994, there was still uncertainty as to the future of the Community College Centre.

LEA evening classes at Bodmin Community College

There were two surprises for me. Firstly, it was a wild night, even by Cornish standards, yet this seemed to make no difference to attendances at all. This was typified by one older man who had driven 26 miles from Devon across Bodmin Moor. He was semi-retired, but still drives the local school bus. Secondly, the organiser had warned me that few of the students were "local", but this seemed not to be the case, unless she was working with a "narrower" definition of local than I was. "Local", then, like "rural", is a relative and subjective term, not a fixed objective category.

This was especially noticeable in the two computing classes ("Computing for the Terrified" and Desk-Top Publishing) I visited, and reflects the way in which the reorientation of the adult educational curriculum towards more vocational areas can broaden the range of participants. Three of the students (one woman and two men), including one in a wheelchair, were from two neighbouring farms on the edge of Bodmin Moor and were involved in efforts to diversify from farming into other activities - holiday cottages in one case, and in the other horse-riding-with-English holidays for German teenagers. Computing would also be helpful with the increased amount of paperwork on the farm[3]. Three other men were using the course for work reasons; one of them was now self-employed and was missing the support he had been accustomed to in a full-time job. The other two were from the local Fire Service which is introducing a computerised call-out service; they wanted to find out a bit about computing before training began at the workplace. On the other hand, a woman from an outlying village was trying to keep up with her son's use of computers at primary school. She had been to the school as a child but in the days before computers were part of the school curriculum.

The plan is to develop a structure of short courses which will be accredited and available in the three main centres of population - Wadebridge, Bodmin and Camelford. The basic "Computing

[3] Other courses attended by farmers' wives for vocational purposes included food-hygiene for cheese-making and the bed-and-breakfast trade, and accounting to assist with the general work of the farm.

for the terrified" will be followed by a course exploring further options and then more specific courses covering word-processing, desk-top publishing, databases and financial packages.

In the woodwork class were two farmers' wives, again neighbours, for whom this was a rare evening away from the farm. Both help on the farm as an extra unpaid pair of hands. They have never had careers of their own, but have noticed that younger women on farms are increasingly trying to keep up their own separate working lives. A retired farmer had lived in Cornwall for 28 years after farming in Salop and Dorset; he had heard about the course while on an organised Ramblers Association walk. Two "incomers" worked for a small chemicals research firm at Tintagel. Well-educated, they have clear ideas about what constitutes a "good class" - a well-prepared tutor, lots of tools, suggestions of projects they could take up. The other students I spoke to were a retired schoolteacher from Yorkshire who had been in Bodmin since 1957 and a professional potter from London with a bed-and-breakfast business in Boscastle. She was a member of the Boscastle WEA group referred to below, and having heard of my visit, had come prepared with a spirited written defence of adult education: "I hope very much that the classes will remain cheap because it would be a crying shame if they were the domain of the rich. The idea that only classes leading to a certificate should be funded and therefore happen at all is short sighted and downright scandalous." I hope I was able to reassure her that I was not a government inspector from London come to close down adult education in Cornwall!

Although no claim is made for the representativeness of this group, they do reflect the range of motives that people have for attending adult education evening classes. At the same time, one could deduce from this small selection some of the problems that discourage people from participating: transport for people without the use of a car (many of these students were from 15 - 25 miles away); cost; and precisely that because adult education does serve a wide range of motivations, some people may assume that it doesn' t correspond to their own situation. It was very helpful in the Bodmin newsletters to find pen-portraits of a sample of students, but these reflected more those with an access to work or further education motivation than the very mixed motives of the evening class students. It is also the case that the responsibility to reflect the complexity of adult motivation to learn is not just the responsibility of local organisers hard-pressed for both time and money; events such as Adult Learners Week provide an important national focus for the promotion of adults learners, and should stress the perspectives of both urban and rural people.

Camelford

Adult education for the Camelford / Bodmin / Wadebridge area operates from an ex-school caretaker's house (The Bungalow) at Camelford school. This is another modern school just out of the town centre, serving a wide rural catchment area. The Bungalow also houses the Careers Service, the local Link into Learning Centre, the C.A.B., the school reprographics facility and a community reprographic facility. The organiser is responsible for a very decentralised service which has grown up with her: she began 17 years ago, with a dozen classes, mainly craft, at Camelford. The very low ratio of full-time to part-time hours means that the work is concentrated into two evenings at each of the three main centres; more experienced tutors are allowed to operate at other times. In this situation, there is a danger that the organiser is simply seen as the office person, collecting fees, delivering receipts, checking registers; it is important for her to spend time talking to students about what they like, dislike, about possible future developments. This activity is identified as market research, but the organiser's view of the activity suggested that the discourse of marketing was being used to talk about an activity that

equally well could be identified as part of the guidance process, but more clearly linked to the activities of one provider than the Cornwall Education Guidance Service.

In relation to non-participation, the main emphasis is on making the existing service as attractive and accessible to people as possible. Giving good individual attention to people is seen as a way of getting good word of mouth publicity, even if this means at times bending the rules slightly (e.g. by allowing people to pay for classes by instalments). There is never enough time or budget for publicity purposes, and in particular the organiser felt she had insufficient time to get out to talk to local groups, such as village hall committees. Despite this, there are a range of activities talking places outside the three main sites:

- with RAF wives on a base, working alongside an organisation called HIVE: Help, Information, Volunteer, Exchange
- daytime basket-making and painting courses at a converted mill near Wadebridge
- classes in several village halls and village schools.

There are some restrictions on places that can be used: in an area where both religion and politics are taken seriously, the Liberal Club or the Methodist Chapel might both be regarded as "out of bounds" by some people. Not all adult education subjects are uncontroversial either: within living memory Yoga has been preached against in Cornish churches.

Childcare is a continuing problem, and the more rural the area, the more it is a problem. For example, consideration has been given to running classes alongside playgroup times, but often the playgroup is using the only public space in the village which adult education could use. An attempt was made at Bude, further up the coast towards Devon to put on Family Workshop activities for parents and children, in order to attract "non-traditional users". But as has been found in other areas, such workshops can become dominated by middle-class women whose presence deters other women from participating. They are also expensive to run, and not surprisingly have been discontinued. Where daytime courses are run, an attempt is made to match these to school times.

Transport is also identified as a problem. Even where a household has a car, it is often the man who uses it in the daytime for his own work. Often school buses are the only form of public transport available, and often have circuitous routes. Thus having some daytime provision in the villages is seen as essential. Typing classes were held in villages using equipment specially taken out for that purpose - these have now been replaced by laptop computers. This work is basically the responsibility of one tutor who keeps the equipment in her car-boot.

Other aspects of the service have to correspond to the realities of a low-pay seasonal work economy. There is a note in the prospectus: "To enable students involved in the Tourist industry to join classes more easily, Autumn term classes in Coastal Districts often start later than others". At the same time there are limits to what can be done with existing resource levels. For example, staff attempt to be "flexible" in relation to the financial position of people who may be in employment at the beginning of a course but know that they are going to be made redundant because of the seasonal nature of the work within a few weeks; yet the prospectus also warns students that concessionary fees are cash-limited: "Concessionary fees will be allocated on 'FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED BASIS'; once all of the money available

to the Centre for concessionary fees has been committed no more students will be enrolled at the reduced rate of fees." January start courses have been in difficulty for some time, and the organiser is now attempting to deal with this through starting courses after the February half-term when people have (hopefully) cleared their Christmas debts. This still allows them to finish before the seasonal trade reaches its busy summer period. Tax relief on vocational courses is regarded as a 'significant' development, yet there are relatively few vocational courses in North Cornwall (and of course no college at all).

Informal adult learning occurs in the context of numerous organisations in the area: the Sports and Leisure Centre (also on the school site); several branches of the Women's Institute; a lively Over 60s club offering "film strips, talks, bingo, video, films, demonstrations"; bell-ringing; amateur dramatics; a folk dance club; the Old Cornish Society. North Cornwall District Council, in conjunction with the Countryside Commission, have a busy programme of talks and walks, comparable to some of the developments referred to in the Lizard area (section 5). Some of these walks are themselves co-ordinated by members of voluntary groups such as the Bude Canal Society or the Ramblers Association.

Overall, there was a sense that adult learning was still problematic in North Cornwall, and that many of those who did participate had acquired a positive attitude to adult education before coming to Cornwall. The organiser felt that at least in this corner of Cornwall, education had been identified as neither a means of getting qualifications nor a pleasant leisure activity.

It is perhaps appropriate to end this section at Camelford Library which occupies the upper floor of the old Market Hall (the lower floor is used as a daily Age Concern Drop-in Centre). This has a wide range of information about local and not so local activities and organisations. The librarian is from "up country", married to a Cornishman who went out of Cornwall to train as a teacher but has returned as headteacher at Delabole, the village of slate quarry fame. Of 5 children, 3 have already left Cornwall to work and study away, while the youngest two are also talking about it. In a poem by the Cornish poet Charles Causley there is explicit reference to the "Delabole slates" on the roof of a Cornish school, and the poet is elegiac for not just the withering of childhood hopes and dreams but also, implicitly, for a society that for 100 years has seen its sons and daughters unable to find meaningful work in a depressed, peripheral economy:

> *And I recall another voice. A teacher*
> *Long years ago, saying, "I think I know*
> *Where all the children come from, but the puzzle*
> *To me is, as they grow up, where they go?"*
> *Love, wonder, marvellous hope. All these can wither*
> *With crawling years like flowers on a stalk;*
> *Or, to some piper's tune, vanish for ever*
> *As creatures murdered on a morning walk.*
>
> (from Charles Causley, "School at four o'clock")

Boscastle

The small village of Boscastle, like St Keverne on the Lizard (section 5, above), is the setting for one of the five Cornwall RCC / WEA village projects. Members of the WEA branch I met for a group discussion identified a number of communities within a village of only 800 people:

- "indigenous" - agricultural, fishing and service jobs, and retired people from these occupations
- "yuppie outsiders" with weekend / holiday homes
- a retirement community, some of whom have been in Boscastle for a long time, including some in sheltered accommodation
- artistic people, usually self-employed
- middle-class incomers, usually travelling to work outside the area
- a sub-culture of New Age "drop-outs".

It is clear then that what follows must be related back to this complex set of "communities". Despite this complexity, the village is seen as pulling together against outside threats, most recently in campaigning against a wind-farm. 200 people attended one meeting about this. Objections came not exclusively from incomers, but from those whose jobs were linked to the tourist trade in an area of extraordinary natural beauty; only the farmers searching for alternative profitable use for marginal agricultural land were seen to gain from this development. The WEA branch is currently trying to organise an evening about "Alternative Energy", towards which there is general sympathy, despite the opposition to the wind farm.

The RCC's interest in Boscastle has included upgrading the church hall to village hall status, an important move as it is the only public hall in the village and is home to the playgroup, youth club, senior citizens' club, charitable events, the WI, family functions and classes. They also did a survey of housing needs; thus RCC concerns are based around ideas of community development. On the other hand the WEA has aimed to attempt to bridge the gap between its liberal education tradition and community development, at the same time reviving the voluntarist principle of branch activity. This led to early confusions over the role of the new WEA branch: issues about bus shelters and public toilets were brought up at WEA branch meetings, when these were clearly part of the Parish Council work. The most obvious success of the branch has been the development of the community newspaper, the "Boscastle Blowhole", which reached its 4th number in Winter 1993, with 32 A4 pages comparable in quality to any community paper I have seen. The need for such a paper emerged from discussions between branch members and groups such as the playgroup, school PTA and Parish Council; its production and distribution involve about 20 people, and it is distributed free to all residents and money is raised by selling copies to outsiders and through advertising (equivalent to about 20% of total space in the paper).

The classes developed by the WEA group began in a liberal education mould, but have developed towards more traditional LEA adult education concerns. Thus Geology and Church History have given way to Aerobics, Car Maintenance and Tap Dance (this last one is run as a private class). This creates a dilemma which will eventually have to be resolved. While the role of the voluntary WEA branch has been critical in gathering support for these activities, in a way that the limited resources of the LEA organiser could not, it is arguable that the LEA should fund activities that are clearly within its remit. At the same time, the small amount of additional funding from the RCC has enabled several classes to operate on lower numbers than

those demanded by the LEA for "viability." Local involvement also enables the use of local skills, so that Car Maintenance has used the local garage proprietor as tutor.

Within living memory, popular culture flourished in the village in the form of weekly floral dances. This no longer happens and the band has disbanded. There is a conscious effort to attempt to recreate some form of shared overall culture in the form of events such as carnival, beer festival and "duck races." This raises interesting questions at the theory and practice levels of how far it is possible for a "common culture" to co-exist alongside the very different cultural formations outlined above. The WEA branch will certainly need considerable skills to negotiate its way through competing claims on its limited resources, as well as encouraging those who do not willingly "volunteer" for education to begin to articulate their own demands. This may well involve extending the range of cultural groups represented among its active members. They include the Rector and his wife, who is WEA branch secretary, a mixed farmer (an ex-teacher), several self-employed artists, several retired professional people. But in a village of this size people can come to play a number of roles. For example a self-employed jeweller is also a mother, school-governor, secretary of the playgroup and No 2 on the "Blowhole."

There is a lot at stake in Boscastle. It could become a self-perpetuating, mutual admiration society of people with common backgrounds and interests, indifferent to the existence within the village of social and economic needs; an exclusiveness which amounts to social exclusion. Or, as suggested in the final section of this report, it could become a model for the development of adult learning in rural communities through the linking of informal voluntary effort with formal educational input. Looking back at an unpublished theoretical paper on the Five Villages project is to be aware of the distance travelled, but also what remains to be done:

The Objectives of Community Development through Education

Several objectives of community education have been suggested elsewhere. These could include:

1. *To engage in an educational process aimed at increasing people's awareness of social, environmental, economic and political issues, particularly within their own community.*
2. *To encourage citizen participation as a way of gaining greater influence over resources and decision-making processes.*
3. *To work with people - especially disadvantaged groups - so that they can influence the course of change in ways that seem desirable to them.*
4. *To work with consumers to ensure a fuller take-up of services, to press for a better service delivery and more comprehensive provision.*
5. *To work with the providers of community education (including schools and further education establishments, pre-school playgroups, sport and recreation associations, community development organisations, arts groups, the library, local specialist environmental and other groups and the adult education service).*
6. *To increase people's capacity to discover, define, pursue and achieve objectives and in the process to develop more confident relationships with one another (and) with the outside world.* (Unpublished paper)

8. Models of development

8.1. The professional model

Professionalisation has been a constant cause of concern with adult education workers. This is scarcely surprising given the peripheral status of adult education within the education service. Indeed, adult education still has only the most shaky legal basis. Key questions have never been resolved:

- is there a distinct science (andragogy) concerned with the teaching of adults in the same way as there is a distinct science of teaching children (pedagogy)?
- what is the relationship between education and training in adult life? (this is crucial in national terms as education falls within the remit of the DfE, and training within the ED)
- are the grounds of the professional claims of adult educators their desire for professional status and pay, or their relationship with their professional clients (adult learners)?
- what are the respective roles and boundaries of the various agencies concerned with the advancement of adult learning?

It is certainly not my intention to deal in any detail with any of these issues. I raise them here to emphasise that the inconclusiveness of the debate about professionalism within adult education is profoundly dysfunctional for the "clients" we aim to serve - adult learners. At one level, debate about adult education is concerned with the concept of needs; at the level of practice it is concerned with provision, since in practical terms "meeting needs" is limited by three common features of the various branches of adult education:

1. The tiny budgets available to adult education workers, and the need to generate income through fees
2. The restricted nature of the adult education curriculum in all sectors
3. The poor articulation between adult education structures and the social and economic settings within which needs are generated and experienced.

To develop this third point a little further: to experience a need for most adults is not to have a warm, expectant glow but to have a deep feeling of want, of deprivation, of powerlessness, of frustration. Thus we have seen in this case-study of adult learning in Cornwall how major social and economic catastrophes - economic decline, unemployment, low pay, violence, social divisions, the breakdown of communities - flit in and out of the adult education scene. At particular points particular adult education workers make contact with the pressure points, guidance is offered, some provision made, but there is an absence of overall strategy, of any notion of how adult learning, widely conceived, could become part of an overall strategy for social and economic regeneration.

Outreach is an essential activity for adult education workers. It is not marketing, the selling of a product to a customer. It is not even market research, finding out what will sell in the market-

place, what price the market will take, what few activities might be safely discounted for the sake of overall market image. Outreach is the intelligence network of the service, the point at which we do make contact with social and economic life, the point at which need is defined and motivation begins to build in adults that the future can be different, they can be different, their potential as human beings is not exhausted by their presented constrained lives. But outreach is also the impossible task, the first activity to go at times of cuts, the last entry in the diary, the moveable feast. It is perhaps time to ask ourselves whether the chimera of outreach in the 1990s is more a way of justifying our inaction than of describing our activity.

8.2 Adult education and the voluntary principle

What, then, is realistically possible? Although there may not be an adult education "profession" in this country, there is at least an adult education "tradition". One significant part of that tradition is the voluntary principle, the involvement of adult learners themselves in the organisation of learning. One of the chief victims of the failed drive towards professionalisation has been the voluntary principle. Yet it persists. I emphasised the critical role of the Community Education Councils in Derbyshire in both developing the Derbyshire CE service and defending it in its hour of need. Thus when I say that the Boscastle branch of the WEA offers a possible model for the development of adult learning in rural areas, I am thinking about a principle which is long established and persistent, a current rather than a tide, one might say.

A resurgence of the voluntary principle at a local level in rural areas can be seen initially as a response to the economics of adult education, the difficulty of organising motivation in such a way that groups of adult learners can come together in sufficient numbers to justify the expenditure of scarce public resources on them. It is a question of the outreach work itself being done through voluntary effort. In this sense, it can also be seen as a response to continuing cuts in available public funding for adult learning. However, it is worth noting that the work at Boscastle was a direct result of small **additional** amounts of funding being made available. The voluntary principle may also be viewed as a long-term strategy for adult learning, both in rural and urban areas, one which focuses attention on the search for structures which foreground the priorities of adult learners themselves rather than the views of "professional" adult educators about what might or might not be valid forms of adult learning activity. Rather than seeing educational providers as intervening from outside in local communities (and leaving open whether a community is identical to a spatial location or whether different communities co-exist within a spatial location), this view of adult learning stresses the continuing dialogue between adult education workers and local communities. This contrast is expressed in figure 3. In the second voluntary model, the advantages are very simple: involvement and motivation are generated and democratic control asserted. The problematic aspects are the contributions of the providers of adult education:

- the availability of resources to finance the required programmes
- the willingness of "professionals" to enter into this kind of partnership with people
- the training that is required in order for the voluntary association to operate effectively to express the learning requirement of the community/-ies.

I regard this last element as crucial. Again, it suggests that the professionalism of adult education workers finds its true expression not just as specialists in the organisation of learning programmes, but in the understanding of the dynamics of communities, and the social and economic forces which underpin them. In turn, this understanding will help incomers to rural communities, who will often be the first to volunteer to organise a local voluntary group, to use their skills to help others within the community / -ies to find a voice too.

One further point that must be made is an acceptance that local and national needs will not always coincide. To accept the importance of civil society is also to recognise the significance of the state, national and local, in the modern world. As I argued in section 5, many aspects of state action have implications for adult learning. There is certainly no reason why state agencies should not interface with local voluntary learning organisations, and I have explicitly included this in the voluntary model of figure 3. However, the financial implications of this, both in terms of actual provision and the role of the voluntary organisation in supporting such provision, will need to be recognised.

It is not enough to transfer responsibility for adult learning from professionals and the state to adult learners either individually or collectively. Resources are required too. Otherwise our adult learners may end up like Causley's children:

> *The cry of those who to a certain valley*
> *Hungry and innocent came. And were not fed.*

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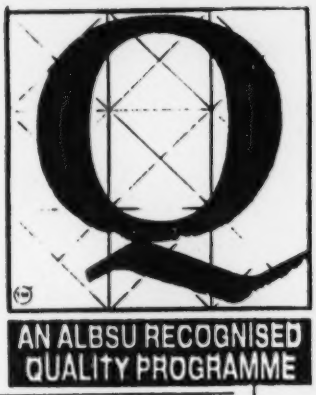
ALBSU'S QUALITY STANDARDS

are that every student or trainee should be entitled to:



1. A confidential, personal interview before beginning tuition.
2. A learning opportunity within easy reach of home.
3. At least four hours direct tuition a week.
4. An appropriate teacher/student ratio in a learning group.
5. Respect for gender and cultural identity.
6. A negotiated learning plan.
7. Regular assessment of progress.
8. Access to progression including advice and guidance.
9. Access to accreditation.
10. Teaching by staff trained to nationally recognised standards.
11. Access to suitable learning material.
12. Teaching which takes account of the context for learning.

Figure 1

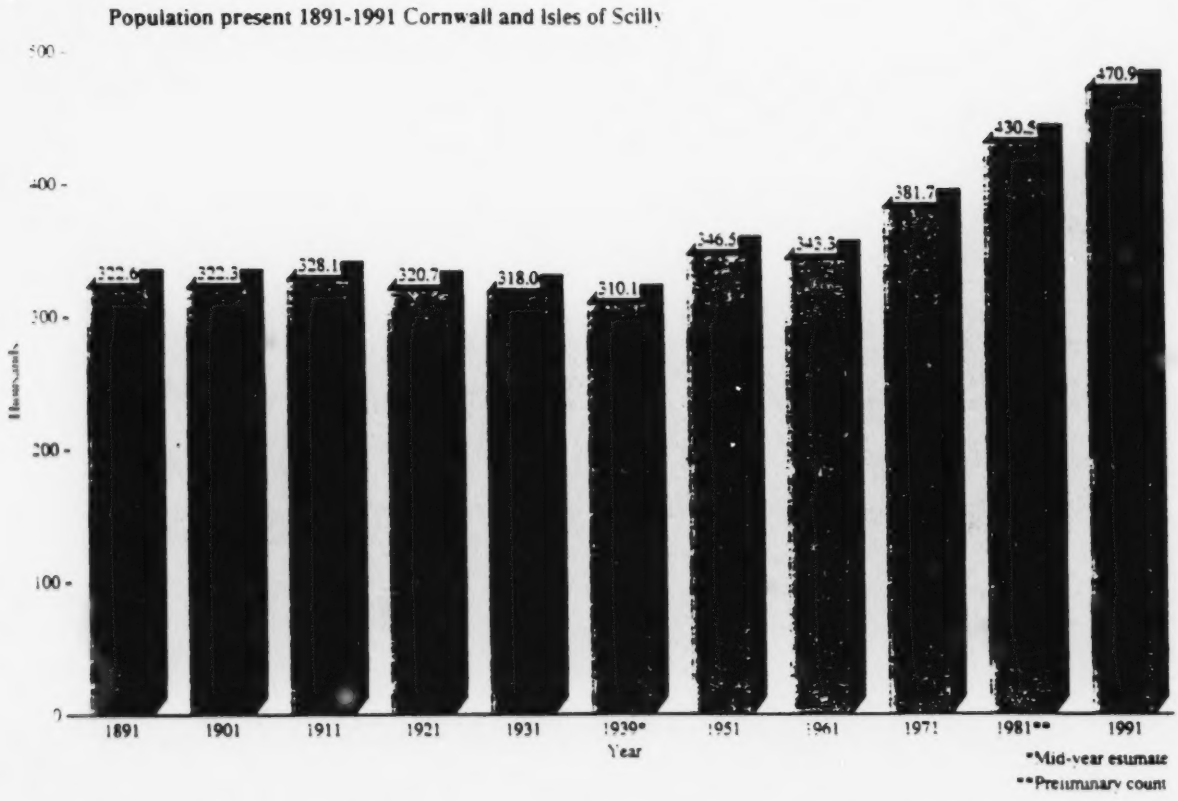

Population present 1891-1991 Cornwall and Isles of Scilly
500
400
300
200
100
0
322.6
322.3
328.1
320.7
318.0
310.1
346.5
343.3
381.7
430.5
470.9
1891
1901
1911
1921
1931
1939*
1951
1961
1971
1981**
1991
Year
*Mid-year estimate
**Preliminary count

Figure 2 Higher education access routes in Cornwall

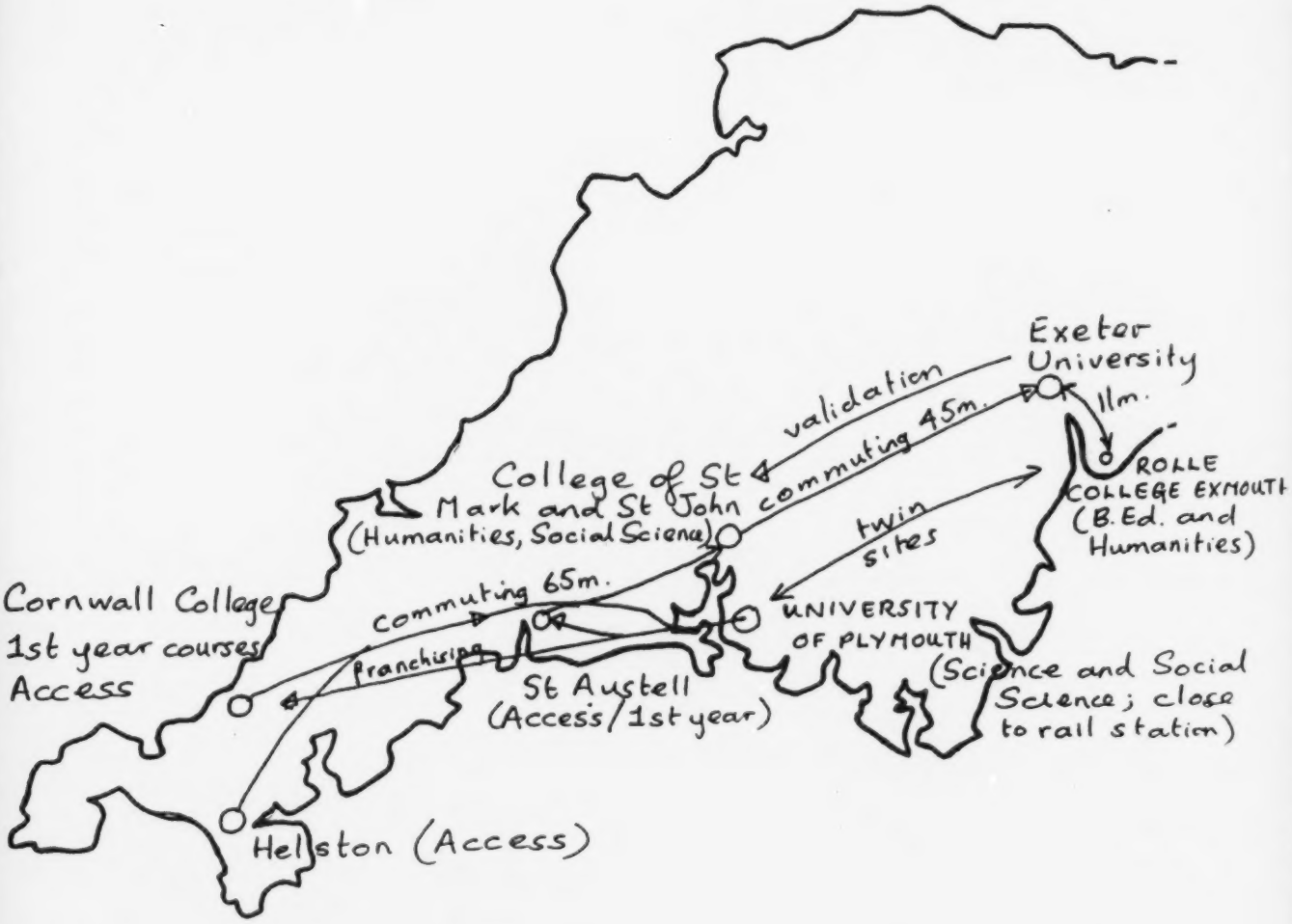
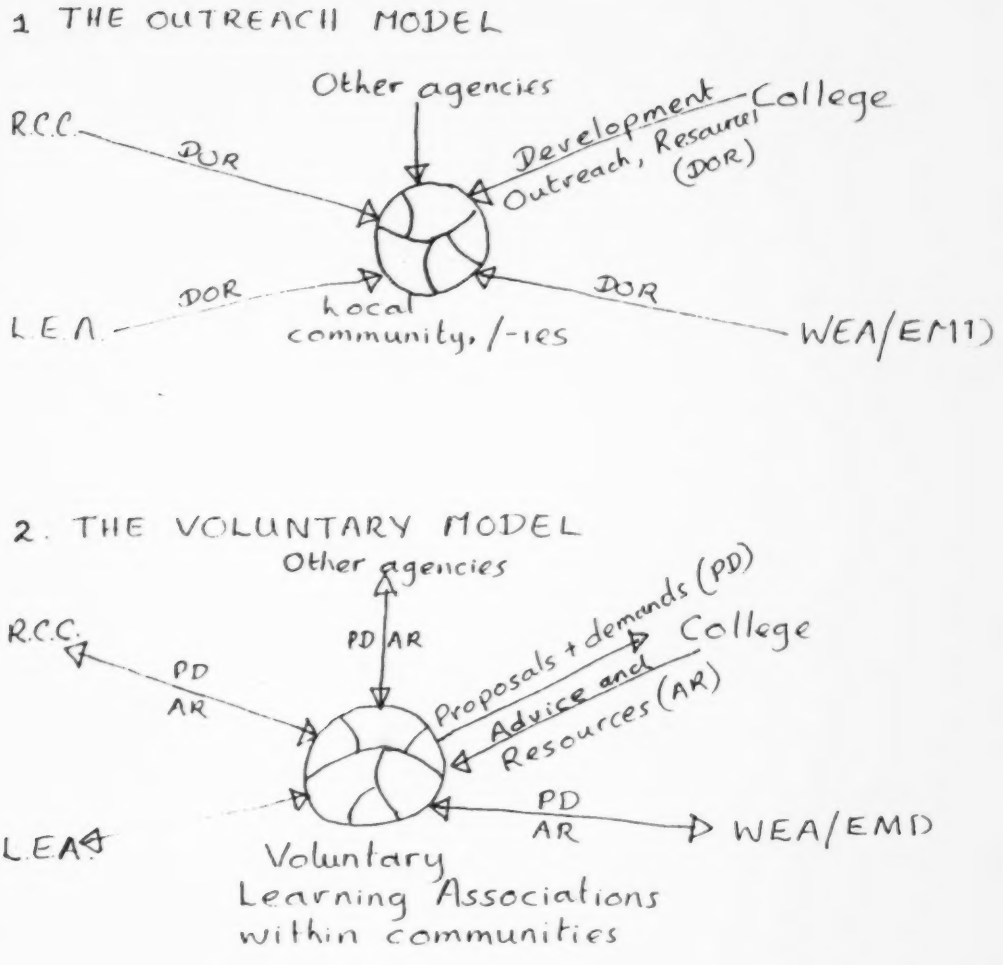
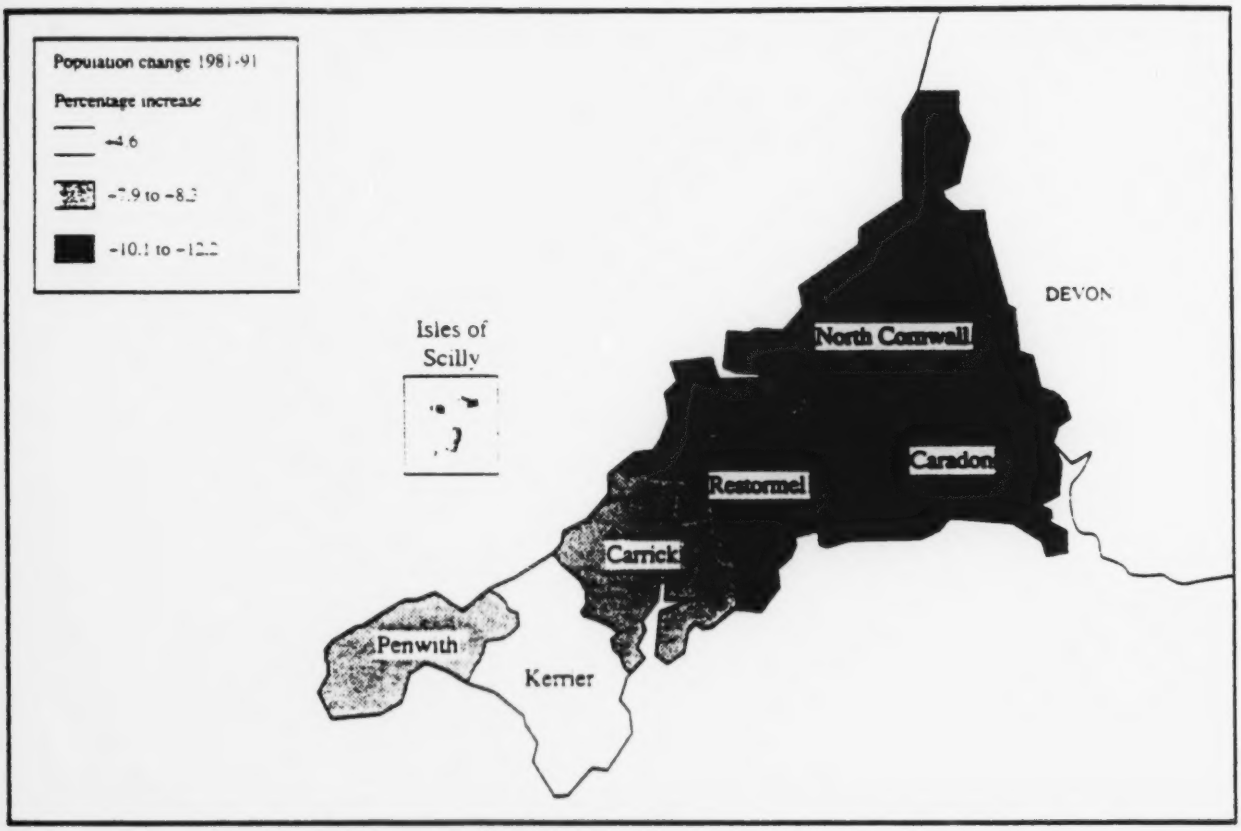


Figure 3 Adult Education: Models of Development



Map 1 Percentage change in resident population (1981 population base) 1981-91: districts in Cornwall and Isles of Scilly



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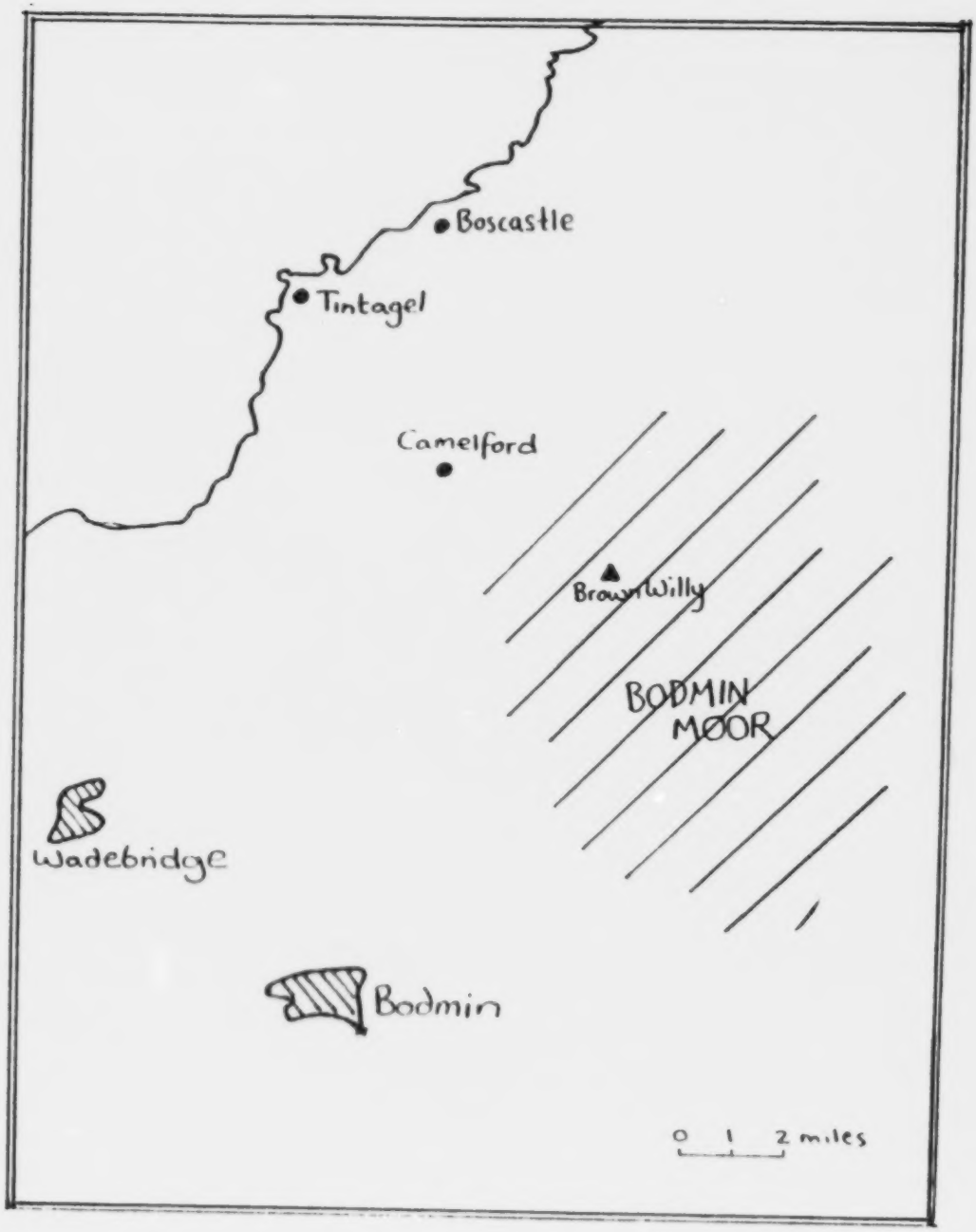
Map 2 Location map of Cornwall

Map 3 Helston and the Lizard

Map 4 North Cornwall Location Map



Case Study 4

North Yorkshire

Mike Boice

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1. The County of North Yorkshire

North Yorkshire is enormous. It was created in 1974 and comprises the major part of the North Riding together with the City of York and parts of the East and West Ridings. It is the largest Shire County in England covering an area of 8309 square kilometres (3208 square miles) mainly in a broad swathe of land across England north of York which, were it not for the intervention of a few miles of Lancashire, would stretch from the North Sea to Morecambe Bay. A small bulge of the County exists to the south of York reaching down to the river Aire and this is the District of Selby.

The backbone of the County is the Vale of York ("a rich, thirty-mile-wide plain where every yard of the fertile soil is carefully farmed and gentle villages abound .." [Heriot, 1979]) which passes north to south through the middle of the County carrying the spinal cord, the A1. The lungs are two upland areas, one in the west known as the Dales and one in the east, the Moors. The County, as well as having a long coastline from north of Whitby to south of Filey and abutting rural areas to the west and the north west, also lies adjacent to some very populous and industrial areas: Cleveland to the north-east and the Leeds, Wakefield, Castleford, Pontefract areas to the south-west. The main centres of population are the towns of Harrogate and Scarborough and the City of York; then there are a number of market towns of varying sizes dotted across the County: Richmond, Pickering, Northallerton (the County town), Thirsk, Selby, Skipton, Ripon, Whitby and Malton.

North Yorkshire is essentially and overwhelmingly rural. Any passage through the County whether by train or car confirms this fact. The nature of this rurality varies considerably, however, from highland to lowland and from remote rural to adjacent-to-urban rural. Population density in the County is 87 per square kilometre (34 per square mile) with a variation from 3507 per square kilometre in York to 35 per square kilometre in Richmondshire (which covers a large area of the Dales). For comparison, the District of Lewes in East Sussex which is not generally thought of as an urban area has a density of 304 persons per square kilometre while the density for England and Wales as a whole is four times that of North Yorkshire. The resident population on Census night in 1991 was established at 702,162, an increase of 4.8 percent since the last Census in 1981 and growth continues. In fact, North Yorkshire's population is rising at twice the national rate (Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, 1992).

Yorkshire was traditionally divided into Ridings - North, East and West. Three, it transpires, because the very word Riding has its derivation in thriding or thirding. The abolition of the Ridings in the local government reorganisation of 1974 was not popular in an area where tradition was and is deep-seated. In fact, 20 years on from that change, the present Local Government Commission for England, which is in process of proposing a new set of structures, has reported a finding that 33 percent of MORI poll respondents felt "very strong" attachments to the Ridings (and, incidentally, an even higher proportion to Yorkshire as a whole - 55 percent [Local Government Commission for England, 1994]). At least the establishment in 1974 of North Yorkshire left the inhabitants with Yorkshire in the title of their new County unlike some of their compatriots in the east.

The present system of local government is in two main tiers. As well as the County Council there are eight District Councils: Richmondshire, Hambleton, Ryedale, Scarborough, Craven, Harrogate, Selby and York. Final recommendations of the Local Government Commission have just been published and, if they were to be implemented, would result in the establishment

of four single tier authorities - the reincarnation of the three Ridings, albeit in a slightly modified form from pre-1974 days, and a new City and County of York. Despite the reinstatement of the Ridings, these proposals are far from universally popular. In fact, a well placed official in County Hall said that "it is difficult to find someone in favour". The County Council is seeking leave to obtain a judicial review and there is some possibility that, to quote the same officer, "the whole thing might all implode". The official position of the County Council is that the present two-tier arrangements should stand while conceding that a strong case is made for York to be a unitary authority.

The electorate of the County has, since 1985, been shifting its allegiance away from the Conservative Party which ruled from reorganisation in 1974 to that date. From 1985 to the last local government election in 1993 the Conservatives required the support of the Independents to remain in control but since then even that has not been sufficient. The present state of the parties is: Liberal Democrats 35; Conservatives 29; Labour 23; Independents 9. This new situation caused considerable problems at the beginning of the administration but, I was told, it had now settled down following an agreement that the Chair of committees would rotate through the parties with each new committee cycle.

North Yorkshire appears to have survived the recession relatively well. The County's Economic Development Strategy for 1994/5 claims that: "Despite current unemployment levels, North Yorkshire is probably the most prosperous county in the north of the country." (North Yorkshire County Council, 1993).

North Yorkshire has had unemployment levels consistently better than both the national and regional averages. For example, in January 1993 the rate in North Yorkshire was 8.7 percent (with a variation from 5.9 percent in Northallerton to 16.4 percent in Whitby) while the national rate was 12.4 percent. Northallerton, in fact, has the third lowest level of all the 335 travel-to-work areas in the country. The less rosy part of this picture is that in the year to January 1993 the level of unemployment in the County had risen faster, much faster, than the national average. It is not possible to go into detail here about reasons why the county should have fared better during the recession than the rest of the country. It is possible, however, to extract from the Strategy that the County has significant manufacturing strengths and a reasonably well-balanced economy. Employment in manufacturing is 17.4 percent of jobs compared with 21.2 percent nationally, in the service sector 68.8 percent against 71 percent and, significantly, 4.3 percent against 1.3 percent in agriculture and 3.9 percent against 2 percent in coal mining (which provided much of the job growth in the 1980s) and power generation. In common with East Sussex, North Yorkshire relies heavily on small firms with 25,000 of these employing 25 people or less.

A trend which was reported in the 1991 Census and which is in line with the rest of the country is that since 1981 the number of men in employment has fallen and the number of women has risen sharply. The number of full-time jobs has remained basically unchanged with a loss of male full-time jobs matching a rise of female full-time jobs, while growth in employment derives from an increase in part-time jobs. A taxi driver told me that Rowntree's and Terry's, the famous chocolate makers of York, were laying off full-time staff and employing people for mornings or afternoons only.

The following table of information (Table 1) extracted from 'Regional Trends'(Central Statistical Office, 1993) provides a snapshot of some aspects of life in North Yorkshire and compares these with the three other areas covered by this research project. Analysis of the

tables is outside the scope of this study, but they do raise interesting questions and issues. It would have been interesting, for instance, to have obtained a view on what underlies the relatively high figure for children in care given a southerner's perception of the strength of family ties and the enduring role of the extended family in parts, like this, of the north. The figures for disposable income and GDP serve to reinforce the comments already made about the prosperity of the County while the levels of car ownership are unsurprising given that prosperity, the rural nature of the County and the continuing decline in public transport.

Table 1

All figures 1991 unless indicated	North Yorkshire	East Sussex	Cornwall	Derbyshire
Children in care of local authorities (per 1000 of population)	36.1 (15.1 in 1981)	30.3	28	28.8
Day nursery places (per 100 under 5's)	31.9	41	11.1	21.1
percentage of pupils aged 16 staying on in education	74	67	82	73
percentage of school leavers with no graded results	6	2.5	3.7	5.1
percentage with 1 or more GCE 'A'level	27	30.5	13.5	13.9
Gross Domestic Product Index (UK = 100)	95.2	78	76.3	90.5
percentage unemployment rate Jan. 1993	7.1	12.6	14	10.2
Average weekly full-time earnings in £'s	Male:297 Female:217	Male:299 Female:232	Male:264 Female:198	Male:309 Female:214
Disposable income per household 1990 (UK=100)	108 (1986:112)	105.2	91.5	92.9
percentage of households with no car	22.7	33.1	24.6	31.3
percentage of households with 2 or more cars	25	22.9	24.7	23.7

The overlaying of other statutory bodies onto the existing authority frameworks is a significant feature of life in North Yorkshire and the extent to which these bodies are seen as either a good thing or a bad thing depends to some degree on whose perspective is being sought. There are, for example, two National Parks, the Yorkshire Dales National Park and the North York Moors National Park. These bodies have considerable powers over developments within their borders and, no doubt, curb the worst excesses of the tourist industry whilst at the same time recognising the importance of tourism for the economies of the two areas. There is, however, a view amongst the local farming communities that, when it comes to regulating their activities, the powers are too great and too bureaucratically exercised.

Much of North Yorkshire has been designated a Rural Development Area by the Rural Development Commission and, although the Commission has proposals for some size reductions to this Area, this is an important factor for those operating in these areas and will be referred to in later sections.

Last but by no means least in terms of importance is the money that comes into the County as a result of applications to a variety of European Union funds. This point will be taken up in more detail later but, for the moment, suffice it to note that a very large part of rural North Yorkshire has very recently been granted Objective 5b status as a result of a joint application by the County Council, Durham and Cumbria.

2. Methodology

At the outset of this part of the research project I was aware of an acute problem which was, where to begin. After a very short space of time the acute problem became where to end. The prospect of doing justice to the quality and quantity of work being done by a multitude of organisations and agencies in an area as large as North Yorkshire given the limited time frame and budget, was quite daunting.

My first move was to purchase a map, the AA Road Map of Northern Britain to be exact, since I had only the most hazy idea of the nature and location of the County. The map was pinned to the wall after the greater part of the boundary of the County had been picked out in pink highlighting pen. It was the greater part because this particular map, by chance, cut off that bulge to the south of the county that is the District of Selby. At this point I decided, prematurely as it turned out, to take my lead from this cartographic quirk and to ignore that area; after all, with such an enormous geographical area something had to go, why not Selby.

The research that had already been done in East Sussex and Derbyshire and written up provided a methodological model. Clearly, if a picture is to be painted of a county then large areas of the canvas need to be filled quickly and the only way of doing this is to obtain key documentary evidence and to identify and interview key respondents. The point has already been made in the Cornwall study that this approach is inclined to overemphasise the view from 'above'. There is little that can be done about this other than to recognise the problem since it is almost always the case that those with the most broad and comprehensive knowledge of what is going on, at least as far as intentions are concerned, are those people at or near the top of organisations and institutions. They are also likely to be the most influential in relation to the allocation of resources and so have the greatest impact on actions at the local level.

Once this process of information gathering gets underway, something of an information explosion occurs. Each contact leads to at least one other and more often than not many others. The potential of these new contacts has to be evaluated against the tantalising background that any one of them could be the person that really illuminates a particular part of the picture. It was interesting to note how often the names of perhaps six to ten people kept being mentioned by other people. Had I been systematically logging and mapping this information I speculate that I would have ended up by knowing who were the key 'players' in relation to policies and action for change as far as education and training in rural areas are concerned. I am not sure that, in a working together sense, they all know each other.

In order to provide some counterbalance to this view from above I decided to spend a little time in two contrasting rural areas. An early decision was that one of the areas had to be a location either in the Dales or on the Moors since these seemed to encapsulate some well-established views about the nature of rurality in England. The second choice emerged from an early conversation with the WEA's Development Officer even though, initially, I found myself

resistant to it because it did not fit my preconceptions of what was typically rural or typically Yorkshire. It was also not on my map.

It is very unlikely that this piece of work can do more than provide a background painted in fairly thin wash with broad brush strokes together with some worked up detail here and there. It will do scant justice to a most interesting county or to the many people who, with very little prompting, gave willingly of their time, their knowledge and expertise and their resources. I was constantly aware that any exchange was likely to be one-sided at worst, lop-sided at best. More often than not I was taking not giving, though I was also aware on several occasions that my own knowledge of the adult education world and my experience as an Adviser in a local authority led me into situations where my expertise was of value to those with whom I was meeting.

The view of the Project Steering Group at the University of Sussex is that an integral part of key respondent methodology is the responsibility owed by the researcher(s) to the respondents. This is not just a matter of saying thank you! In each of the case-study areas, busy people have given up their time and energy not just to give interviews, but also to make quite complex arrangements for visits to classes and interviews with other colleagues and students. It is thus our intention to acknowledge this commitment by feeding back to the respondents our views in the form of this case-study report. Before this report was published respondents were given the opportunity to do three things before any material from the project entered the public domain:

1. to check the material for simple errors of fact

2. to give a view on the extent to which the analysis of the researcher corresponds to their experience as practitioners

3. to indicate any information of a sensitive variety which should be either omitted or disguised using conventions of anonymity.

This process is usually described as respondent validation.

Key respondents were:

- North Yorkshire LEA Community Education Service: Mike Dobson and Chris McGee
- Jane Storr, West and North Yorkshire Access Network
- Teresa de Saram, WEA
- Yorkshire Countrywomen's Association
- NYFWI (East)
- NYFWI (West)
- Canon Eric Richards, Diocese of York
- Eddie Benson, Yorkshire Rural Community Council
- Jo Cutter, North Yorkshire TEC
- Malcolm Chase, University of Leeds DACE
- Julie Adby, North Yorkshire Careers Agency
- Ann Daykin, Upper Dales Adult Education
- Anne Riley, Selby College
- Alan King, Ingleborough Community Centre
- Barbara Smith, Castleford Women's Centre
- David Harvey, Dales Partnership Project

An early discovery was that a two year research project had been commissioned by the University of Leeds, Department of Adult Continuing Education (Murphy, B. 1993), undertaken in the period September 1990 to August 1992 and the final report produced almost exactly at the time that this part of our research project was starting. The subject matter was an evaluation of rural adult learning and much of the fieldwork was undertaken in North Yorkshire. There was some prospect therefore that the ground would already have been thoroughly covered and that the focus of this research would have to be reviewed. In the event, Leeds DACE having kindly agreed to provide a copy of the report, it quickly became apparent that this was not the case and, although the Leeds report was helpful in many ways and will be referred to here and elsewhere, the approach of that research as represented by the final report was quite different to that adopted for this work.

There are two methodological points made by Bernadette Murphy, the Leeds researcher, which I want to refer to here. In reflecting on some of the practical difficulties in her research she comments that there was "a tension between the twin objectives of evaluation and audit" (Murphy, B. 1993, p.20). In the context of this report I would have to say that it *is* an issue though not, I think, a major one. The principal focus of this report is an audit and any qualitative statements are made with the clear understanding that they are tentative, perhaps even speculative, and that they are not underpinned by detailed empirical evidence. The other point which I feel is well made by Bernadette Murphy is that the difficulties of doing research in rural areas are analogous to the difficulties faced in trying to create new learning opportunities in those same areas.

Finally, it should be noted that the Steering Group for this project, mindful of the attention that had been placed on the more formal aspects of adult learning programmes in the earlier parts of the research, asked that attention should be given in the North Yorkshire study to the less formal end of the continuum with particular reference to the role of the churches and the Women's Institutes. This provided an additional challenge since, by definition, formal learning programmes are better documented and more visible than less formal ones.

3. County-Wide Organisations and Broad Perspectives

The Local Education Authority

In relation to LEA activity, the timing of this research project was unfortunate. Just over a year ago the authority had taken a decision to reorganise radically its adult education and youth service provision, and at the time of the fieldwork visits most energy was going into setting up new structures and putting into place new policies.

The decision that the County Council took was that from April 1993 the youth service and adult education would cease to exist as separate services but would come together as a new Community Education service.

- *The County Council has agreed a policy statement which emphasises its commitment to the development of community education:*
- *North Yorkshire is committed to providing opportunities for lifelong learning, where access and value for money in use of facilities are maximised.*

- *Provision will be planned and managed in an integrated form, within a local context, to accord with national and county policies, and result in experiences of the highest possible quality for participants.*
- *North Yorkshire is committed to facilitating partnership between statutory and voluntary organisations, to meet the education, training and recreational needs of all ages* (North Yorkshire County Council Education Department, 1992*)*.

As far as adult education is concerned, the delivery of the bulk of the programme (21,000 students in 1993/94) has traditionally been by the FE Colleges, albeit using the sites of the schools in their areas as well as their own campuses, but there was also a free-standing service in the north of the County where there is no FE College. It was agreed that, notwithstanding the incorporation of Colleges in April 1993, this arrangement should continue for a further year, which it has, but schools now want their own budgets, and allocations to some of them will be made direct as from April 1994. Needless to say this move has not been without its critics in Colleges who are themselves trying to develop their links in out-centres in order to grow and to remain viable.

The proposals for the restructuring of the service will lead, eventually, to the setting up of 32 community education 'Districts' each with a high degree of devolved responsibility. Each District will be expected to have its own Action and Development plan and will received a devolved budget. The County is at pains to stress that "this is delegation of responsibilities rather than abrogation and, therefore, it is essential that the County establishes a clear framework of strategic guidance within which the Districts can operate." (North Yorkshire County Council Education Committee). The County proposes to do this in a number of ways; firstly by providing a Curriculum Framework, secondly by including in this Framework a Statement of Entitlement for individuals, and thirdly by insisting on Quality Assurance mechanisms.

The Framework is interesting. The concept of a community education curriculum is a difficult one and one which has proved too challenging for many local authorities. East Sussex, for example, with a Community Education service, has not got an integrated framework for the curriculum of its rather separate adult and youth operations. Following a two day OFSTED inspection of community education in North Yorkshire, the Inspectors actually commented that this was the first time that they had seen an LEA addressing this issue. The Framework appears to have drawn heavily on youth service traditions and practices, something which has to be set against a background of views from a number of sources that the County's youth service was vigorous but that its adult education was generally too traditional and stuck in a rut. It will be interesting to see how the delivery of learning programmes to adults can respond to the challenge of this new approach.

The Framework describes a curriculum based on five principles:

- Participation in decision making
- Personal growth and development
- Social and community development
- Guidance, information and support
- Spiritual awareness

It seems likely that most adult educators would be able to identify with the first four items in that list and conceptualise their practise in these terms but may find it difficult to see how the fifth could be an organising principle of their work.

The Framework then goes on to specify curriculum priorities, while indicating that local programmes should be based on a local assessment of priorities. The County priorities are: active recreation; arts; communication skills; environmental issues; equal opportunities; family education; health education; international (awareness); life and social skills; and technical and vocational skills. There is nothing in the documentation which specifically addresses the issues relating to rural areas although the counter to that comment would undoubtedly be that the Districts will be best placed to identify their own needs and set priorities accordingly.

As has already been said, there was no opportunity to make any assessment of the impact of these changes or for that matter to see any programmes resulting from this new conceptual base. There is evidence in abundance of activity relating to the management of change - new committees and development groups, new job titles and roles, conferences and meetings, staff development, and papers galore. There is, of course, a degree of pragmatism associated with the changes which manifests itself, for example, in the location and number of the Districts. The need to have a secondary school in each District seems to have been paramount but, as I discovered in the Upper Dales, this may result in a District boundary which does not accord with local practice and which may lead to some local opposition. It remains to be seen whether an authority like North Yorkshire, if it continues in existence, will be able to follow through the implications of devolved responsibility and a community development approach to support programmes which may seek to meet community need in unusual and innovative ways. The key to this could be the partnerships that develop in the Districts and beyond and the ways in which District committees are able and willing to take risks and to look beyond vested-interests of, for example, College and School governing bodies, to the welfare of the communities.

There are similarities to be found with East Sussex in relation to the development of community education. There are, for example, no grant maintained schools in either authority; the delivery of community education through schools has not yet, therefore, had to meet the challenge presented by such a new relationship. The willingness of authorities to accede to schools' demands for increased responsibility and devolved budgets for community education may not be entirely unrelated to the issue of grant maintained status. Both LEAs, too, have had to struggle with the funding implications of devolved budgets and integrated services and the move from historic funding to some sort of formula based on notions of equity. North Yorkshire had hoped to have this in place by April 1994 but this was not possible and the target date has been extended by one year.

The total community education budget for North Yorkshire was £3.8m in 1993/4 with, additionally, £800,000 coming from the FE Funding Council. At the time of my visit it looked as if savings of £163,000 would have to be found, not a very auspicious start for a new initiative but I was told that the "pain" of reorganisation had been felt mainly at headquarters and that the possible areas for cuts would not damage work going on in the field to any great degree. However, the proposals for savings did include reductions in the pay of part-time youth workers and a shrinking of the development fund from £75,000 to £60,000.

County Federations of Women's Institutes

There can be few national organisations which are as well known or which provoke such clear, if sometimes somewhat misguided, perceptions and images as the WI. The caricatured stereotype is of ladies (not women) of a certain age making jam and singing Jerusalem. The reality would seem to be that there is enough about current membership and practice to sustain that view but that, additionally, there are other sides to the WI which would challenge it. These different aspects of the organisation seem to relate, at least in part, to the activities that take place at different levels of the organisation. A visit to a local Institute meeting might serve more to confirm the view rather than to refute it whereas an observed session of the National Federation executive might have the opposite effect. It is not possible, in this research, to test this tentative hypothesis nor to explore ideas about whether this would be due to the fact that the organisation gives women a chance to develop wider perspectives as they take on roles of responsibility at Institute, County or National level or the fact that "The National Federation of Women's Institutes has been dominated since its inception by middle-class women and by members of landed county families." (Deem, Rosemary, 1993). What does seem to be clear is that, although the WI is ostensibly concerned with the reinforcement of dominant social values and traditional culture, it can and does challenge change or challenge for change. The role played by the WI in persuading the Government to alter its hard line on liberal adult education between the publication of the White Papers and the drafting of the Further and Higher Education Bill is something of a "cause célèbre" in adult education circles. Also, at the 1993 AGM, three, status quo challenging, Public Affairs resolutions were passed with overwhelming majorities; one on domestic violence, one on water conservation and one on set-aside and industrial uses of crops. The domestic violence resolution was framed as follows:

> *This meeting calls upon the Home Secretary and the Lord Chancellor to carry out a review of the Homicide Act and the Criminal Justice system, believing there is an urgent need for reform of the definition of provocation to include prolonged domestic violence* (NFWI, 1993).

Action at local level in support of a Private Member's Bill was encouraged and, what is more, many of the organisations in alliance with the WI to support this Bill (Alliance of Women's Organisations to Reform the Law of Provocation - AWORLP) have an openly radical feminist agenda.

The organising unit of the WI is the Institute - there are almost 9000 in England and Wales - and these can vary in size from 20 to 150 members. These units then group into County Federations and beyond that there is the National Federation which, as well as employing 40 professional staff at its London headquarters, runs the WI's residential centre in Oxfordshire, Denman College. Although once exclusively rural, the WI now welcomes urban members; it has to be said, however, that it is essentially a rural organisation. The purpose of the WI is:

> *to provide a democratically controlled educational and social organisation for women providing the opportunity of working and learning together to improve the quality of life in the community, particularly in rural areas, and to enable them to develop their own skills and talents.* (NFWI).

This has been supplemented recently by a Policy and Action Plan which appears to have been produced with more than half an eye on the current political educational agenda and seems to

reflect the struggle that all liberal adult education is having presently to justify itself in the face of crude vocationalism. It is worth summarising:

1. Provision of learning opportunities in the WI is *high profile.*
2. Planning, provision and assessment of learning opportunities is becoming *regionally based.*
3. Our classes and courses are being organised in simple units of work and reflect *modern trends.*
4. We are offering *nationally recognised certificates* for members who wish to take them.
5. Our members expect and will receive *good educational advice and guidance.*
6. Provision of learning opportunities is one important method of recruiting new members.
7. Provision of learning opportunities throughout the WI is based on *quality.*
8. WI members take *pride* in their education.
9. We *plan and learn together.* (NFWI).

There was once a very large Federation covering the whole of Yorkshire but, some time after the 1974 local government reorganisation, it was decided that (a) the Yorkshire Federation should be split into six new Federations along the lines of the new authority boundaries, and (b) North Yorkshire, being itself so large, should have two Federations, East and West. The plans did not meet with universal approval and, as a result, a new breakaway organisation was formed which named itself the Yorkshire Countrywomen's Association; a separate section will comment on its work.

The two Federations, one based in Thirsk and the other in Ripon, run on very similar lines and offer similar programmes so, in outlining what they do, I will only distinguish between them where there are important differences. It was not very easy for the Federations to engage with my request for help and information. They were both keen to emphasise that their programmes were broadly similar to all WIs, stressed that their whole operation was essentially educational and said that they would happily send me information; but in one case they had difficulty in identifying a particular person in the organisation that I should speak to as they had done away with the post of Voluntary Education Co-ordinator (VEC) and who, had there been one, this would almost certainly have been my first point of contact. In the event I was able to meet two people from the East, one of whom had been the last VEC, and a VCO (Voluntary County Organiser) and the VEC from the West. My over-riding impression was of an immense and varied amount of activity going on both at Institute and Federation level. A listing of a few of these activities will serve to convey a flavour:

- narrow boat painting;
- an 'entertaining extravaganza' with the Cooking Canon at York University (700 attended);
- darts tournament;
- multi-driving day - go-cart, skidpan, JCB!;
- rural carers survey;
- Federation quiz;
- knitting workshop;
- tour of the Rhine Valley and Moselle.

The individual Institute member has access to a whole range of Federation-generated events as well as to the programmes which make up the dozen meetings a year of the local group, to the WI Certificates (in home economics, public speaking etc.) and to Leadership training. Great encouragement is also given to members to use the facilities and programmes of Denman College - 14 percent of members of the East Federation went there in the last year.

Both Federations are very aware of the difficulties that members in the most rural areas of the county face and go to some lengths to mount events in accessible locations. They are also aware of the extent to which the WI membership is an ageing population (53 percent of the readers of *Home and Country*, the WI's monthly magazine, are over 55) but this does not appear to have given rise to any significant decline in membership. A point that the respondents from the East wanted to stress was that the WI provides for many women an arena for gaining, developing and sustaining confidence. They were able to provide anecdotal evidence of people who had joined Institutes being hardly able to speak in public but who had subsequently gone on to be tutors or officers within the organisation.

The WI presents a significant challenge when it comes to analysis. It is very tempting to see it as an organisation which is about conservatism and about confirming women in domestic roles and it is not hard to find evidence of this. It is, however, more than this as I have tried to show. In a detailed report on Sibsey WI in Lincolnshire, Elsdon et al reported, for example, that,

> *in all instances joining the Institute was followed by (and usually considered responsible for) a great expansion and intensification of activity. This was seen by a high proportion especially as a preparation for, or even the cause of involvement, in service to other organisations, or public service itself.* (Elsdon, K et al, 1992).

In the conversations that I had with WI members in the Dales there was confirming evidence of this very point.

It seems also that the organisation is having to take note of the changing situation facing rural women. As a Suffolk member is reported as saying:

> *Over the years the WI has become much more radical as a response to the situation in which rural women are finding themselves. They feel under-resourced and under-supported. Women are bearing the brunt of a lot of political decisions - in this village we practically look after everybody. These campaigns have to be pursued by people like us because the normal democratic process is becoming unanswerable to the people.* (The *Guardian*, 27.4.94).

Yorkshire Countrywomen's Association

Insofar as this organisation had its origins in and differs very little from the WI, and since I was not able to see any of its activities, I do not propose to report at length on the YCA. It was formed after what appears to have been a fairly acrimonious dispute over the structure of WIs in Yorkshire post local government reorganisation. A section of the membership of the old Yorkshire Federation was vehemently opposed to the boundary changes and the loss of the Ridings. They were also incensed by what they saw as a diktat from National HQ which was supporting the changes and which ultimately had the legal power to enforce them. This section then broke away and formed the YCA which now has 129 Branches. The aims of the

Association are to "further the skills, knowledge and social activities of its members and to preserve the heritage of Yorkshire". It prides itself on having no national organisation, no grants and nothing imposed from above; positions which it stresses without reference to the WI but which are clearly intended to be distinguishing features between the two. It also claims to have no image (unlike the WI) and thus be more attractive to newcomers to villages.

Unusually for a non-national organisation, the YCA has been accepted into membership of the Associated Countrywomen of the World, a London based association which says it is the only international organisation representing 'women and homemakers', which stands for 'traditional values of family life' (a notion which sounds very much like John Major's 'back to basics') and which pledges to help women gain access to education and training.

The Rural Community Council and the Rural Development Commission

A brief outline of the work of a Rural Community Council (RCC) was provided in the East Sussex and Derbyshire case-studies and I do not propose to repeat that information here. What I do wish to do is to make comment on the distinction between the Rural Community Council (RCC) and the Rural Development Commission (RDC) and to summarise some of the work specific to the Yorkshire RCC.

The distinction between the status and functions of the RDC and the RCC is one that, at the outset of this research, I was not at all clear about. I was interested to note that in the course of an interview with a senior local authority officer it became evident that he too was using the two interchangeably and he was someone who works very closely with the RCC. A factor in this confusion, for those working in North Yorkshire, is that the Yorkshire RCC and the regional office for the Humberside and Yorkshire RDC are both located in the same building to the north of York.

The Rural Development Commission is the Government's agency for economic and social development in rural England and it has three main tasks:

- the regeneration of disadvantaged areas
- support for voluntary activity and key services, such as housing and transport, across all rural areas
- ensuring that the needs of rural communities and businesses are taken into account by policy makers and service providers nationally. (Rural Development Commission, 1993)

Within this overall brief the Commission also establishes priority areas and calls them Rural Development Areas (RDAs). These RDAs cover about 35 percent of the English countryside, 2.75 million people, and will take up £26.5m of the RDC's £42m budget in 1994/5. There are two RDAs in North Yorkshire, one which broadly covers the Dales and the other which broadly covers the Moors. The Commission claims to be 'a voice for rural England' and in substantiating this claim points to the influence it has had on rural childcare and housing policies, the work of the rural Training and Enterprise Councils and on village services. In contemplating these claims against the evidence here and elsewhere of a continuing deterioration of services in rural areas, it can only be surmised either that without the RDC things would have been so much worse or that these claims need to be analysed more critically.

The RDC's principal role is an economic one with two elements - building factories and workshops and, through its agent COSIRA, providing assistance to small firms - but it argued for and was given a brief for social development. In the present climate and in common with other development agencies its economic criteria have primacy over its social criteria. The RDC is constrained in ways which make the realisation of its social criteria difficult without the intervention of another agency and one which is in the voluntary sector.

> *the Rural Community Councils (were) a suitable vehicle for the Development Commission to use...for the following reasons. RCCs maintained a neutral stance, had close complementary relationships with the County Councils and were broadly concerned with improving quality of life of rural areas by working through the established channels. ... Many RCCs would not have been able to survive without the Commission's financial support.* (Benfield, G. 1990)

The Yorkshire RCC is a voluntary organisation, registered as a charity, which was established in 1934 and which exists to promote the well being of rural communities. Its commitment to a community development approach is clear from the way in which it describes what it does:

> *We believe in thriving rural communities and our work aims to empower individuals and communities to influence their future,.....*
> (Yorkshire Rural Community Council)

Funding for the YRCC comes from a variety of sources including the RDC, local authorities and local firms. The RCC also has a substantial contract from the North Yorkshire Training and Enterprise Council to provide employment training to NVQ levels 1 & 2 in Business Administration and Painting and Decorating, and 15 places on a Skills at Work scheme which it is able to link to projects in rural areas like the refurbishment of village halls. The RCC also initiates, on its own or more usually with others, new pieces of work, helps and advises in the securing of funding and then may manage the project. The Dales Partnership Project which is reported on later is an example of this approach with funding there coming from the RDC and Help the Aged. The YRCC also tries to be consistent in its management of project work with its espoused methodology of community development; thus the Rural Arts initiative which is also referred to later was initially something that came under the wing of the YRCC. Every encouragement was given to it to become self-supporting which it now is.

The YRCC is a major contributor to the strategic planning work which goes on in drawing up the Rural Development Programme, the mechanism for accessing and prioritising the funds of the RDC. Projects funded from the RDP are commented on in later sections of this report.

The Churches

Faith in the Countryside (1990) is an admirable publication which analyses the rural condition, points to good Anglican and ecumenical practice where it exists and sets out an agenda for action by the church and by others. It seems possible that much of this careful research and many of the interesting ideas will come to nothing because the church finds itself embroiled in a financial crisis largely of its own making following a disastrous period of property speculation in the 1980s. Time and again in the course of this research I was told that the local clergy performed a vital function in the community and a key role in relating external initiatives to local contacts and local needs. Yet even keeping clergy in the countryside, in the face of a shortage of cash and, in some but not all areas, dwindling congregations, is becoming more and more difficult. Although the practice of uniting benefices is not now going ahead at

the rate that it once was, there would seem to be something approaching a battle for the hearts and minds of those in authority in the Church of England in an attempt to keep a rural clergy. In Lincolnshire experiments with voluntary local ordained ministry have already begun and this is not the only place where non-stipendiary ministry is being encouraged. It is possible also that in some Dioceses the emphasis will shift to the deaneries and away from the parishes with lay readers being licensed to the Rural Dean. This retreat from the rural areas, then, mirrors what has been going on in many aspects of local authority and public services.

In order to combat some of the worst aspects of these tendencies there have been efforts by groups of churches from different denominations to work together. A North Yorkshire example is cited in 'Faith in the Countryside':

> *A vision of a new relationship is enthusing the clergy and laity of the Church in Nidderdale.... Six full-time clergy of four denominations serve 24 churches with a membership of 810 in a widely scattered population of 4800. They are developing a management plan which will enable them to co-operate in the use of resources of people, money and property so that the primary tasks of mission and caring can be given greater priority. Natural geography defines the 'shape' of the vision, which some other areas could emulate. The shape of existing deaneries may not make any sense for the tasks which local churches wish to undertake together.* (p.261)

I was also given evidence that where, in some villages, there had been a shrinking of congregation and consequent likelihood of closure in a chapel which a few elderly villagers brought up there still wished to attend, some members of the Anglican congregation started to attend chapel services (sometimes going to both services on the same day) to try to ensure that the chapel was kept open until the last of these old people died.

The presence of local clergy is clearly a significant factor in considering the role of the church in contributing to informal learning opportunities in rural areas and in the ability of the church to initiate or co-operate in projects which would do the same. There does, however, seem to be another important factor at work in the church as in other organisations and this is to do with the influence and ideas of charismatic individuals. One example will be cited in the section on the Dales; another I heard about was the Bishop of Whitby who, every Lent, takes a 'training course' to a different deanery. The attendance was described as phenomenal with churches at Northallerton and Thirsk being packed to capacity with a mixture of church and non-church attenders.

One other interesting piece of work was unearthed too late on in the research period to enable any follow-up. This is an initiative which came from an ad hoc group of church workers and church members from several denominations and which is located in central and northern Ryedale and the Wolds area to the west of Driffield in one of the RDAs. It is called 'Parenting: A Job for Life' and it

> *. . .will seek to put in place parenting skills programmes appropriate to rural situations through a community development approach over a three year term. Based on local churches it will be a resource to the wider community.* (North Yorkshire County Council, 1994, p.413).

The project is sponsored by the South Cleveland and North Yorkshire Ecumenical Council and starts from an analysis of the rural situation which recognises the social implications of having

a substantial low-income minority living amongst a better off commuting or retired majority, of the closure of village schools, of the scarcity of pre-school education and of "The erosion of adult education opportunities, the closure of village shops and post offices each (contributing) to a decline of the informal support system" (North Yorkshire County Council, 1994, p.415). The proposal is that parenting skills courses are mounted using 'Family Caring Trust' materials and that parents who participate in these courses will subsequently lead, with support, further courses or informal groups in their villages.

The Mothers' Unions of the Anglican Church remain an important feature of spiritual and social life for church women. They have the capacity to survive incumbents who do not support their activities and they have a strong central organisation in London. In their programmes they try not to ape the WIs but in rural areas with some substantial overlap of membership there are always strong parallels.

I am aware that this section has been dominated by the Anglican Church. Information on other denominations was hard to come by. Letters received little or no response and good contacts were difficult to identify. However, I did manage to make contact with the Yorkshire Association of Change Ringers who provided me with some interesting information. Ringing is one of those learning-by-doing skills, the theory and practice of which is passed on and down by enthusiastic and experienced practitioners of the Exercise (the name ringers give to their art). In North Yorkshire there are 22 towers with over 100 active members and 19 mute - these latter are mostly 3 and 4 bell towers; not sufficient for change-ringers who require a minimum of 6 bells. Ringers do not, of course, ring only at their own church; there are frequent outings in the summer to ring at other towers and there is even a sport known as 'tower-grabbing' where individuals try to notch up as many towers as possible. I was told that there are some people who have rung at all the 5000 plus towers in this country. Once ringers get beyond the basics they may wish to progress to Quarter Peals - a continuous piece of ringing lasting around 45 minutes with very strict mathematical rules which is considered to be one of the most powerful learning methods for progression.

It is certainly a feature of adult learning that it is diverse and difficult to pigeon-hole. It turns up in the most unlikely places and it is frequently self-organised, self-sustaining and informal.

Rural Arts North Yorkshire

This organisation was spawned by the Yorkshire RCC but is now independent and relies for its existence on grants and sponsorship form local authorities and arts associations. It employs two full-time arts workers and a part-time office administrator and supplements this where necessary with freelance sessional workers. Its programme, which is especially targeted at those in rural isolation, engaged the participation of more than 2000 people during 1993. Much of what it does in its Rural Arts Workshop programme might also be expected to turn up in the programmes of adult education centres, for example pottery, egg decoration, tie-dye fabrics, photography, kite making; the significant difference being that the fees for these activities are nominal and on some occasions crèche facilities are made available.

One of the issues for RANY is the extent to which, if at all, it is an organisation concerned with community development. Certainly the two arts workers, having been with the YRCC, are very aware of the implications of working or not working in this mode. In fact, it is hard to see how some of its activities could fail to be contributing to community development if perhaps in a

relatively unsustained way. In Kirby Misperton, for example, Rural Arts is engaged with villagers in a textile project which will result in the production of a village banner celebrating village life today and in the past and which will, when finished, hang in the village hall. Another example would be the Rural Touring project which aims to promote high quality professional theatre, music, dance and mime in rural venues and to extend the number of possible venues by passing on skills of promotion, marketing and administration to local people. In both cases it is hard to imagine how the person leading the project could avoid, if only for a short period, being engaged in a community development process. Issues relating to community development will be further explored in the conclusion.

What seemed to me to be very evident was that each time I walked into a different organisational setting I was seeing the same world through different, sometimes very different, pairs of spectacles. Each pair did different things to the scene but all illuminated certain selected areas while leaving some dim and some in darkness. One of the effects of people having these differently illuminated 'maps of the world' is that a variety of uncoordinated priorities get set by these various organisations which, even where umbrella funding bodies exist and might be expected to impose some sort of framework, result in a tapestry of often unconnected programmes. This outcome itself can be seen in a number of ways; it can be regarded as the richness of diversity which makes life full and interesting or it can be viewed as wasteful duplication and a watering down of the financial effort that is needed to make a real impact on the issues of poverty and isolation that lay at the starting points of many organisations' aims and objectives for their work in rural areas. This is explored in the following sections.

4. Rural Rides 1 - Remote Rural: Wensleydale and Swaledale

The decision to chose an area of the Dales rather than the Moors was not entirely arbitrary; during the early part of the research more references were turned up which related to the Dales and several names of potential contacts also emerged. However, even on the evening that I drove into Wensleydale for the first time in my life, I had no idea exactly where I would be staying that night or what to expect. My stopping place turned out to be Askrigg, a small community of 410 people almost in the middle of Wensleydale a short distance to the north of the A684 - the main artery of the Dale. Askrigg was once an important market centre which declined in importance when the new road passed it by to the south but which has come to prominence once again through its association with the television series "All Creatures Great and Small" and the growth of the Herriot 'industry'. Although I stayed in Wensleydale, the local research took place also in Darlington, Swaledale and Ingleton.

The Dales are valleys which penetrate deep into and sometimes through the Pennines usually with a significant market town at their mouths. Thus Leyburn lies at the entrance to Wensleydale and Richmond does the same for Swaledale. Almost everyone who lives in the Dales lives in or near the valley bottom. The hills which rise beautifully and dramatically on either side are inhospitable. As has already been indicated, this is the most sparsely populated area of North Yorkshire. I was advised by several contacts that I would see more sheep than people and this was true by a factor of at least 100.

Farming is, of course, the main work in the Dales (lead mining, a once great industry, is long gone) and it is under great pressure. Farms are generally rented or family-owned and run and, with incomes dropping over the last few years, many are barely viable. Changes in EU and Government policy, specifically cuts in Hill Livestock Compensatory Allowances, the ending

of the Guaranteed Price for wool and the demise of the Milk Marketing Board, have resulted in a depressed and uncertain sheep and cow market. Subsidies paid to hill farmers make up a large percentage of their income and without these subsidies many would be dependent on social security benefits or would have to quit their farms. These factors together with the harsh climatic conditions and the problems created by having to operate within the regulations of a National Park Authority make average annual family incomes of £5,600 (Yorkshire Rural Community Council, 1993) look less than handsome. In June 1993 the Yorkshire Rural Community Council produced a report called *Farming Under Stress: A Report on the Plight of Hill Farmers in Swaledale and Arkengarthdale.* The report concluded that:

> *...farmers cope as well as any other group with stress but that social isolation, reluctance to seek help and a tradition of suicide in the Dales may lead farmers to think of this as the only way out in certain circumstances.* (Yorkshire Rural Community Council, 1993, p. 11)

I did note that the Yorkshire Dales Field Centre in Giggleswick, near Settle, has introduced an unusual, perhaps unique, residential course into its programme called 'Stress Release Through Dry-Stone Walling'. I doubt somehow that the near suicidal farmers identified in the YRCC report were the intended beneficiaries of this idea.

Other issues that emerged from this Report are (a) that the pride and cultural independence of the farming community means it resents interference from outside bodies; (b) that farmers need to be encouraged to be more open about their problems and a recommendation that this could be achieved by the development of community groups, and (c) that ways of improving and developing education and training opportunities for the local community should be explored and developed.

The comment of one of the farmers who responded to the YRCC survey:

> *I live in fear of blizzards and of being cut off from the world for two weeks at a time, all winter, I wish I could turn my back on the place, clear out of the hills and never look back, I stick it out for the sake of my family.* (Yorkshire Rural Community Council, 1993, p.10)

stands in stark contrast to the image of the Dales portrayed in tourist information leaflets and to the image which brings numbers of 'offcumdens' (incomers) into the area to live there or to purchase second homes.

> *As you approach the dales a breathtaking view unfolds before your eyes. Wild and lonely fells look down on lush winding valleys. Tranquil meadows are defined by dry stone walls, hidden waterfalls cascade into deep wooden glens, while small villages clutch to the hillsides and bustling market towns provide a focal point for trade and activity. The Dales have changed little over the centuries...*(Richmondshire District Council, 1994)

Tourism is of great importance to the Dales; its annual cash value is estimated at £43m (Richmondshire District Council). The influx of summer visitors results in brisk trade for hotels, guest houses and bed and breakfast places. It also encourages and sustains shops and small craft firms and other operations which, without it, would almost certainly struggle to exist. Hawes, for example, is the rather unexpected location for a well known rope making business which cultivates the tourist by providing viewing access to its operation, by twisting ropes in a prominent area behind the counter of the shop and by making and selling all manner

of souvenirs including dog leads in every size and colour imaginable. It would be safe to say that it is people and families who have been to the area as visitors and tourists who are the ones who purchase holiday or retirement homes there. I met a couple from the Home Counties who came to the Dales four or five times a year and who could not wait for the day when they would be in a position to sell up and move there.

I was not able to obtain any reliable estimate of the relative sizes of the indigenous community and the 'offcumdens'. I did, however, talk to several people who had moved into the area of whom one family was from urban Yorkshire and three from the south-east of England. All made reference to the pace of life as a reason for moving; one woman told me that her daughter commented on how much faster she walked when the two of them visited London. Another person said that three burglaries within a year was what convinced the family that it was time to move. Houses for sale in Askrigg, unusually in my experience, had estate agents details stuck in their windows. On all of them was a comment that the property was "suitable for holiday/weekend cottage". Second-home ownership and holiday accommodation reduces the need for year-round local services, puts up the price of property (house prices in North Yorkshire as a whole are significantly higher than the regional and national average and in areas like the Dales and the Moors, very significantly higher) and can cause resentment among locals. It has been estimated that in Arkengarthdale 82 homes are not permanently used, 5 more than are, and in Wensleydale the number not available to local people is 440 (Dales Partnership Project).

Public transport in Wensleydale exists in the form of a regular bus service and a post bus but it is so infrequent that an outing to, say, Leyburn would mean planning to be there for several hours. There is a bus service in Swaledale but it is even less frequent than that in Wensleydale, in fact the people of Swaledale regard the Wensleydalers as well provided for public transport. The consequence of this situation is that private car ownership levels are high - in Swaledale and Arkengarthdale only 17.2 percent of households have no car and in Wensleydale the figure is 19.5 percent - and the downward spiral of declining services becomes inevitable. Public transport, seeking viability according to a narrow definition, gets reduced, car ownership increases thus reducing even further the demand on public services and, although the number of households dependent on these services gets smaller, those without cars suffer a greater degree of hardship since other services, the post office for example, get relocated to the larger settlements.

One of the first people contacted in Askrigg was Ann Daykin. She runs, on a very part-time basis, the LEA's adult education programme in Upper Wensleydale and Swaledale, is a member of the local WI and a bellringer in the village church. I was fortunate enough to meet her at her home; had I not done so I would have missed the opportunity to spend a little time talking to her husband who was born and bred in the village and who was, until his retirement, one of the local butchers. He painted a vivid and fascinating picture of life in a community that had in the past been much busier commercially than it is today. He was one of two butchers - there are now none - and his shop was one of thirteen - there are now two and one is due to close. He also took his meat out on a van to villages and homes nearby and over the top into Swaledale; a fairly hazardous journey even in a modern car as I had discovered. He also showed me a photograph of the last passenger train to call at Askrigg station in 1954. There is no railway line of any kind through the Dale today although the famous Carlisle to Settle line provides an important link into the network via the station at Garesdale just west of Hawes.

LEA and FE provision

The primary school which used to be the Yorebridge Grammar School (125 on roll!) is the main base for the adult education classes in the Upper Dales. It is not by any means the only base since Ann makes great efforts to take her programme to as many locations as possible (13 in all) to minimise the problems of transport. This year there are some 340 students enrolled, which is a remarkable success given the nature of the area. The programme is a fairly traditional one but one that reflects demand and viability. Perhaps a sign of the times, the printed prospectus divides courses into vocational and non-vocational and, perhaps a sign of times past for many areas of the country, the minimum number required to start a group is eight. Tutors tend to be local but not exclusively so; a yoga teacher travels, without payment of travelling expenses, into the Dales to teach her classes - a round trip that can be as much as 50 miles. Training for tutors is available but they have to be able and willing to get to Northallerton some 30 or more miles away. The whole operation in the Upper Dales is overseen by a management committee consisting of one representative from each of the villages served and this committee meets twice a year to determine the programme. Adult education at the lower end of Wensleydale is the responsibility of Leyburn Secondary School and, in a tradition that has almost died out in many parts of the country, the organiser is a full-time teacher (in fact the Head of Science) who does the adult education work in his spare time. Most of the provision is located at the school; not surprising given the dual role of the organiser. The lower end of Swaledale is served for adult education by the secondary school at Richmond.

Unsurprisingly, the curriculum offer in the Dales is limited with the vast majority of courses being in the arts, crafts and keep fit area. Educational progression is problematic and has to be handled within groups by tutors having to work with several stages in one class. Anyone wanting a broader and deeper range of provision has to look first towards Richmond or Leyburn and then beyond to Darlington College of Further Education. Access to 'A' level courses in the secondary schools is possible for adults but the all too familiar timetabling problem of courses being served up in small units at several different times of the week makes it especially difficult for anyone travelling in from some distance away. Ann Daykin is planning to offer English 'A' level on an experimental basis in the Upper Dales next year.

I visited Darlington FE College and from Askrigg the journey was 40 miles in each direction and it took me well over an hour. The College has an outreach centre at Risedale and is about to appoint a marketing manager there but this centre is really targeting the service personnel who live in large numbers in the Catterick area of North Yorkshire rather than attempting to make any real impact on the rural area beyond. Courses on offer there include the Community Sports Leader Award, the Certificate in Sessional Crèche Work, a Pub/Guest House Catering Course and the Certificate in Management Studies as well as a range of certificated language courses. For any student determined to get to Darlington there is a College bus which leaves Catterick at 0815 each morning and returns at 1630 but of course if you are going to get to Catterick by that time in the morning from the Dales you would have to have a car and if you have a car you would probably prefer to drive all the way to Darlington.

One project that I would have liked to visit but time did not allow was a scheme to help adults with learning difficulties called the Learning Opportunities Partnership (LOP) which is based in Richmond and which actively serves the remote rural areas. The origins were in a group representing the voluntary sector, the local authority - education and social services - and the York College of Further and Higher Education. £2000 was secured from the Joseph Rowntree

Foundation to pay for a consultancy by the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education and the recommendations of this report were taken forward by a formal partnership and by a commitment by three of the partners to put up £20,000 between them to enable the appointment of a part-time co-ordinator. It was hoped that, by creating opportunities for training with vocational skills in mind, employment opportunities could be opened up and horizons could be widened. The programme was due to start with a 10 week course in basic communication skills to be held in Richmond on one day a week from January to March 1994. Twenty students were expected.

The reorganisation of the local authority's provision under the banner of community education, already referred to elsewhere, means that the future of the operation in the Upper Dales and with it the part-time organiser post is somewhat uncertain. It will be interesting to see how the impending appointment of a District Manager impacts on learning opportunities for adults. It is difficult to see how, given the nature of the communities in the Dales, the employment of a local person with excellent local contacts could be bettered but the new LEA policy makes bold and determined statements about getting away from traditional practices. I would like to be able to revisit the area in 18 months to two years time to examine the impact of these changes.

The Churches in the Dales

Both Dales have seen a struggle for souls between the established church and non-conformity. In Wensleydale there was a strong tradition of Methodism and, while it is still in evidence today, the strength of support, at least as evidenced by clergy and buildings, has waned. In Askrigg, for example, there were two Methodist chapels; today there are none. In fact the village also boasted a Temperance Hotel and a Temperance Hall; the latter still exists with the old name carved in stone over its portals but it has been renamed the Village Hall so that alcohol can be drunk there. Mr Daykin can remember, as a boy in the village, signing 'the pledge' just so that he could join the Band of Hope; a social activity as far as he was concerned.

The Methodist minister is now based in Hawes and covers a large geographical area from west of Hawes to near Leyburn. There are six Fellowship Groups which meet across the circuit but apart from that there was no evidence that the Methodist church was having any significant impact on the educational needs of the communities.

Much the same picture emerged for the Church of England. Reference is made elsewhere in this report to the problems that the Church is facing at the moment and, despite the fine ideas and sentiments expressed in *Faith in the Countryside* (1990), again a picture emerges of a clergy struggling to provide the basics without additionally having the time and energy to innovate and create new opportunities. This was not always the case. I was told by someone (a long way from Askrigg as it happens) that, in his opinion, the village would have "died" were it not for the almost single-handed efforts of a previous incumbent. This vicar stimulated much in the way of community development encouraging, for example, a restaurant to open in a building owned by the church. He was also instrumental in the establishment of an outdoor activities centre, Low Mill, in a dilapidated building on the outskirts of the village. This centre thrives and has fairly recently been adapted to enable people with physical disabilities to stay there.

In Swaledale it was the United Reform Church rather than the Methodist which became the dominant seat of non-conformity. The URC minister is very aware of a wider role for the

church in the local communities and was a member of the working group that produced 'Farming Under Stress'. His church has also contributed to a community appraisal which was organised with assistance from the Rural Community Council. He expressed disappointment at the 40 per cent response more because the questionnaire was usually completed on behalf of households rather than by individual family members as had been hoped and therefore the responses, it was conjectured, tended to mask what might have been seen as dissenting views and leave areas of need unidentified. This is a point which links with the comments made in the 'Farming Under Stress' survey. This minister was convinced that issues like unemployment and lack of transport got concealed in this and many other ways as families enacted strategies to save face.

I was told, but I had no opportunity to check its veracity, that there is a small but quietly influential group of Quakers in the Dales.

The Women's Institutes in the Dales

By a lucky coincidence the North Yorkshire Federation of WIs (West) was holding a training event in the Village Hall at Bainbridge, one mile from Askrigg on one of the two evenings that I spent there and I received the go ahead to sit in on this session. It is the explicit policy of this Federation to take its training events into remote rural locations from time to time so that members of those Institutes are not disenfranchised. Notwithstanding this enlightened policy, the people attending represented a considerable number of miles travelled. Those I spoke to were very stoical about this and saw it as a price worth paying to ensure that they supported their organisation and to stay active outside the home and family. They were all very conscious of the need to fill cars partly to be economical, partly to be sociable and partly to ensure that those without transport were not left out.

The meeting was extremely well attended with over 40 women from six different Institutes. Much has been said about the WI being an ageing organisation and this would be confirmed by the evidence of this meeting; very few of the participants, in my estimation, would have been in their 20s or 30s. The meeting was conducted almost entirely in didactic mode by the VEC who is also one of the Federation's Voluntary County Organisers (VCOs), and was very well done with a variety of topics and a lively humorous style. Its principal purpose was to provide members with ideas to liven up Institute meetings, to remind members of Federation rules (for example, that each Institute must put on at least 11 meetings per year which are free of charge to the membership), to pass on information about such things as the tutor training scheme and to encourage members to make use of Denman College. It is interesting to note that, during the first half of the evening, comment was made about the likelihood that the LEA's work with adults would diminish and that the WIs could play an important role in filling some of the gaps that would be left. This must have been a very mixed message to Ann Daykin who was in the audience. It was not clear, beyond a recognition that the WI fulfilled a similar function for its members to that of the LEA for many of its students, what exactly was behind this suggestion. The WI is a membership organisation, gender based, with a very definite image and unlikely, therefore, to be able to appeal to as wide a cross section of women as is LEA adult education.

The WI could be said to have a curriculum which is dominated by arts and crafts. I spoke with one member who had moved into the area from the south of England - an offcumden - who was not entirely satisfied with this bias but recognised the difficulties associated with breaking new curriculum ground. She told me how, just prior to the last meeting of her Institute, the booked

speaker had cancelled leaving them with a problem. Her husband, who had been in academic life as a scientist before retiring, had previously expressed a willingness to give a talk if ever the occasion arose where it seemed appropriate. She therefore turned to him in this crisis and he obliged. Her main point in telling me this story was that the subject matter of his talk - the contamination of foods by naturally occurring substances - and the way it was presented would almost certainly not have appealed to the membership had it been put to them in advance. In the event the talk was extremely well received and a follow-up is a distinct possibility.

Science is as absent from the curriculum of the WI as it is from adult education generally although efforts are being made to change this situation. The VEC told me that "I admit progress is slow because most people shy away from science, but we are winning!"

Community Development (The Dales Partnership Project)

I spoke with David Harvey who manages, on a two year contract, a project based in Swaledale but covering Wensleydale and Arkengarthdaleand funded by the Rural Development Commission and Help the Aged. I was also fortunate enough to be given access to an excellent report - *The Report of the Dales Partnership Project* - that has been produced of the early, research, stage of the programme. The project aims to survey and encourage responses to some of the needs of older people living in the Dales and it has identified, not surprisingly, that services, housing and transport are the three big issues.

> *Transport is lacking for travel within the Dales and also for travelling outside of the Dales area to nearby towns. These two different types of transport deficiencies are both important in the way they affect people's ways of life. ..... Socially important trips, such as to visit a friend in hospital or an evening out, are simply not made, or expected to be made. In this way rurality leads to inequality and social deprivation. This also contributes to the self-sufficiency of the area and encourages close knit communities* (p.47).

Having a community development methodology and a very limited timescale the project seeks to goad others into taking notice of its findings and acting upon them. So, for example, pressure is being put on the Post Office to respond to the problem created by the closing down of two village post offices by providing some form of mobile service. David described the problems associated with being a visiting consultant in such an area for such a short time; about how "the first thing to be overcome is local ideas and traditions" and about how you have to "discuss an idea for at least a year". He also recognised how he was dependent on using the contacts that other people already had in order to get into the communities even though in some instances, as he said about them, "they may not be actively involved with the community but they do know local people".

Just at this moment the project base is being moved from Reeth which is right in the Dales to Richmond which is not. This move has been occasioned by the problem of finding affordable office accommodation but it does seem unfortunate for a number of reasons: it could brand the worker as just another person who provides services from afar, it reduces the possible number of accidental and informal contacts which are often of great importance to projects of this nature and it makes more inaccessible that range of resources and information leaflets that were available in Reeth.

There are some clear messages here it seems for an LEA about to change its style of working with adults into something more akin to the community development model adopted by this project. It is unfair to be pessimistic at this early stage but it does seem possible that, unless the LEA is going to find more resources for rural work and/or is going to adopt some very radically new ways of working, the re-organisation of community education could mean a retreat from locations like this one.

Community Development (Ingleton)

The story of the origins and development of Ingleborough Community Centre is written up in a Nottingham University publication (Elsdon, K.T., 1991) the research element of which has important links with this piece of research. That work seeks to get beneath the surface of what it calls Local Voluntary Organisations (LVOs) and to try to discern what sort of informal learning takes place in those organisations. It is exactly the sort of evidence needed to complement and augment the views of informal education reported here and in the earlier case studies.

Since Ingleton is situated at the western end of the Dales and not far from my base and because the Warden's name was one that had been mentioned by others as a good contact I decided to spend some time there; it seemed too good an opportunity to be missed. The Centre is quite remarkable made even more so by the fact that Ingleton is a community of only 2000 people. The Warden Alan King is quite remarkable too and appears to have been a very enlightened appointment by a very far-seeing Community Association. He has been at the Centre since it opened - its 21st birthday will be in January 1995 - and he told me that at the last count the Centre had 40,000 users per annum; a level of usage which he says equates to a 200 place primary school. The Centre offers a fairly small range of formal classes but it encourages and is full of clubs and groups of all sorts. It also manages to sustain a thriving youth club, an activity which in many community centres is seen as somewhat inimical to other activities. What takes it out of the realms of the ordinary are; (a) its ability to unite all sections of the community (which stems from its origins; a display of community unity of a high order - see Elsdon K.T. op.cit.), (b) its popular appeal and its level of usage, (c) the quality of the building and its equipment - I have seldom seen a better equipped information technology room anywhere, (d) its vision - far from being worn out after 20 years in the job the Warden has a whole range of innovative projects in the pipeline including getting a person who specialises in outdoor sculpture to do some work along one of the local walks, and (e) its ability to attract funding for ambitious projects - the latest of which is a recently opened art gallery which cost £50,000 and which was just about to stage a national touring exhibition from the South Bank Centre called Leger's Circus.

Although he is currently being wooed by two FE colleges (one from outside North Yorkshire) who want to use the Centre to put on vocational courses, Alan King is sure that the Further and Higher Education Act will turn out to be a bad thing for rural areas. He recognises the importance of traditional liberal adult education and of informal learning through other activities as both a source of sustaining and maintaining local skills and a gentle access point for those people who have lost confidence in their ability to learn. As mentioned in the section on the LEA, the re-organisation that is taking place implies a new relationship between FE Colleges and LEA supported centres. As far as Craven College, the nearest North Yorkshire FE College, is concerned, the Warden was not sure how this was likely to develop particularly as the College had recently made a new appointment of someone to look after its outreach work.

What seemed abundantly clear to me was that the Centre and the Warden had acquired a reputation for excellence that spread way beyond what might be regarded as a normal geographical area of influence and which, together with a long-term undertaking that was given about funding a proportion of running costs by Sir Alec Clegg's West Riding and inherited by North Yorkshire, made them strong and autonomous and unlikely to be blown about by the winds of change and deflected from their mission. As I have mentioned, the Centre's information technology unit is impressive. Alan King is interested in the telecottage idea and is going to explore the possibilities for Ingleton. He also told me how the local FE College wanted to install one of its management information system computers there linked to the College. Far from being impressed he took out from a filing cabinet drawer a lap-top computer that had a built-in modem. "With this", he said, "I can be in touch with almost anywhere in the world, why should I want a computer that only puts me in touch with Craven College?" I suspect that the College interest in the Centre would cause Konrad Elsdon to smile wryly. In 1991 he wrote:

> *class provision from the College of Further Education was being reduced, and the Workers' Educational Association and the University had never bothered about Ingleton. ..... Courted by none because of their remoteness, "communities like Ingleton are thrown into an almost stoical state of independence".* (p.102)

Among the many and varied activities of the Centre is an annual drama festival. This has become a very popular event, not least because those who planned and built the Centre had the foresight to include a hall and stage of size and quality that, at the time, could only have been an act of faith. I was told the story of a WI group who wanted to enter the festival and, since Alan Bennett lived in the village, they advised him that he should write them a play and threatened to go to Alan Ayckbourn if he did not. Needless to say, he agreed and wrote about a WI committee meeting debating their entry into the Ingleborough Drama Festival. In the text he runs himself down when one committee member compares him with the 'less smutty Alan Aykbourn'!

Sadly, my visit coincided with a late afternoon lull in activity so I was only able to observe and talk with participants in a 'tea dance'. This was clearly popular with over 40 people, mostly in their 50s, 60s and 70s I would estimate, taking part and hugely enjoying themselves. My conversations with the few non-dancers were not substantial enough to build up a strong case for the ways in which learning takes place in and can be transferred from the most informal of settings but when I subsequently read what Elsdon had said about this it seemed to accord with what I had seen and heard.

> *What emerges from all this is clear evidence that the people of Ingleton are not merely learning in a variety of ways and contexts, but that this learning passes from its original purposes and contexts into others which go far beyond the original activity. They are transmitted to, and affect, wider groupings, the village as a whole, and through it others far beyond Ingleton itself.* (p.103)

The Warden says; "I think in developmental and delivery terms, for example small group drama class - drama group - local arts organisation, or maybe a language class folds through lack of support so becomes a conversation group and we have Italian, German and French examples here, we supply tapes and literature and when interest grows we promote classes again. This is now happening with French. Ingleton has twinned - with much encouragement

from the late Harry Ree - with a Breton town so there's a need for French language skills. Its just a microcosm of the big outside world!"

Other groups and activities

U3A

There is presently no U3A group in the Dales but, judging by the enthusiasm which was shown by one of the respondents when I told her about the organisation, I would not be surprised to find one starting up there quite soon.

WEA

There is an Upper Dales branch of the WEA which puts on one well supported activity in each term. In the Autumn term 1993 there was a course called 'Early Settlement of Wensleydale' which consisted of eight lectures and two field trips. In the Spring term the programme was called 'Then and Now: 1851 to 1994' and was made up of a mixed bag of lectures (Life of a Hawes Surgeon, for example) around that theme. The planned activity for the Summer term is called 'Plant Habitats' and is to be led by the Chair of the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust.

North Yorkshire Business Support Network

This is a network of "non profit making (business development) groups providing demand led, locally held, affordable training and development,"(*Network News,* Jan. 1994) and covering Wensleydale and Swaledale. This network, which is sustained by a part-time paid network organiser, makes some efforts to make provision other than in the main centres of population but the newsletter makes reference to disappointment with low attendances at events - the perennial problem, it seems, for those trying to provide local learning opportunities. In March there was a one day training event for the Wensleydale Business Development Group put on in Hawes called 'Welcome Host'. This is a course promoted by the Yorkshire and Humberside Tourist Board and aimed at upgrading the standards of service and hospitality provided to visitors. The subsidised cost of this course was £50 for members of the network. It is clear that by attracting funding from a number of sources including North Yorkshire Training and Enterprise Council (£20 for each member), North Yorkshire County Council and Richmondshire District Council, accessible training can be provided but the organiser still finds it necessary to urge that "people will be prepared to travel those extra few miles to Richmond or Thirsk." (*Network News*, p.16).

Aysgarth Wednesday Club - for the over-60s which meets one afternoon a month.
Dale End Club, Hawes - meets every Thursday afternoon
Muker Ladies Guild
Askrigg, Yore Club - meets fortnightly
Reeth Dales Wives
Wensleydale Society - local history, talks and walks
Yoredale Society - botanical
Farmers' Discussion Group

My overriding impression of this rural area is one of a people who recognise that the price of living away from instant entertainment (the nearest cinema is in Darlington) is that efforts have to be made to join things and to do things and that, certainly as far as most of the women of the Dales were concerned (it was lambing time and few men were in evidence in the activities I

visited), this was a price that they were prepared to pay. My qualification to that would be that I think that I am talking about the majority of people. There is a significant minority for whom that price is too high. They are practically invisible.

5. Rural Rides 2 - Urban Rural: South Selby

It would be hard to imagine an area which offered a greater contrast to the Dales than south Selby. Where the Dales are dramatically hilly south Selby is dramatically flat; where the Dales are dominated by limestone escarpments south Selby is dominated by power stations - Drax, the largest coal-fired station in Europe, Ferrybridge and Eggborough. The two together challenge any idea of homogeneity in rural life and rural experience in this country.

Selby, like North Yorkshire, was born in 1974. The District population is 88,000 and is growing faster than any other part of the County - 14 per cent between 1981 and 1991 and continuing. Literature produced by the District Council describes it as "predominantly rural in character, its flat intensively farmed landscape containing numerous villages and several small towns." (Selby District Council). The headquarters town, Selby, is situated almost at the centre of the District some 12 miles south of York and the only other traditional town of any size is Tadcaster, the brewing town, which is in the north of the District. Sherburn-in-Elmet is a village fast growing into a town and is the third and last community of noteworthy population. The whole area is well served by national and local road networks - the M62 almost forms its southern boundary and the A1 runs up its western edge. Local train services are reasonable and connect the area with York, which is a main stopping point on the fast London - Newcastle - Edinburgh/Glasgow service (London 2 hours) - and there are local buses, although the deleterious effects of deregulation on rural services mean that many communities here too are highly dependent on access to cars for their mobility.

An important feature of the geographical location of Selby is its proximity to populous urban areas; Leeds: Wakefield, Castleford and Pontefract in the south and west and York in the north. Not only are these places and their facilities closer and more accessible than anything in the Dales but they also seem to exert some sort of culturally hegemonic pull on rural Selby so that the people there are more like their town rather than their country (Dales) cousins. They expect, for example, to shop in huge supermarkets and DIY chains rather than the market town on market day. In the south-west of the District, where this research was focused, the villages contain an interesting mix of people that does not always make for a sense of community. First there is a group of long-standing locals who may or may not be very influential depending, it seems, on whether the village has been one of those whose population has grow significantly recently. Then there are two types of incomers; the first are commuters, generally white collar, who have moved out of the cities and large urban towns to be in the countryside; the second are working class families who may be upwardly mobile or who may have had connections with the village in the past and whose main breadwinner probably works or worked in the coal or power industries. These differences seemed to have been exacerbated by the opening up of parental choice of secondary schools. I was told that in the past all children had gone off together to the school in Sherburn-in-Elmet but that more recently Barlby High School in Selby had been marketing itself in a fairly aggressive way and, with an image of being 'posher', was also contributing to the splitting of communities on class lines.

Employment patterns in Selby are most unusual. Agriculture, for example, occupies 8 percent of the workforce (the comparable figures for North Yorkshire and the UK are 4.7 percent and

1.3 percent respectively) while 23 percent are in the primary sectors of coal extraction and power generation; again a very high figure - North Yorkshire is 3.9 percent. There has also been large scale investment in new technology in the manufacturing sector resulting in a highly skilled but numerically small work force. The area is described as having a narrow economic base and there is some concern that, with a growing population and unemployment levels which, although still way below the national average, grew by 74.5 percent between 1990 and 1992, this makes it economically vulnerable. This fear is further heightened by projections such as those by the Institute of Employment Research that agricultural employment is set to fall between 16 percent and 23 percent to the year 2000. In addition, the workforces at the three power generating stations were reduced by 40 percent (900 people) between January 1989 and March 1993. The Selby coalfield, however, is not affected by the announced pit closures. There was an investment of £1.4b in this coalfield in the 1980s and it currently employs 4000 people and supplies the nearby power stations.

The demography of the area also makes it different from the Dales and runs counter to UK trends. Large numbers of the local population are in the 5-14 and 30-44 age groups so there is unlikely to be any shortfall in the numbers of young people in the near future.

LEA and FE

Up until the present re-organisation of community education, adult education in the area was co-ordinated by Selby FE College with the majority of provision being in the main College with a significant out-centre at the secondary school in Sherburn-in-Elmet. Once the changes are in place the College and the County will have separate operations in the area and will possibly be in competition with one another.

I was to meet a senior member of the College staff but, due to sad and unforeseen personal circumstances, this did not prove possible. I did, however, have a chance encounter with the tutor organiser for non-vocational adult education who confirmed that, although efforts were made to locate some 'safe' adult education classes in village halls and the like, there was relatively little provision in the villages. She also informed me that the College, in common with many others, had realised that the only possibility of reaching the government's expansion figures was to go for the adult market. As part of this drive, the College is planning to launch a Gateway course, not dissimilar to the 'Training on Wheels' programme, which will be aimed at women returners and the unemployed, will be free to participants and will offer a flexible 12-16 hour curriculum.

Training on Wheels

What really took me to south Selby was a meeting early on in the research programme with a lively WEA development officer called Teresa de Saram. Among many other things she told me about, enthused about in fact, was a project which she had developed and called Training on Wheels (TOW).

The TOW project was launched as a result of a successful European Social Fund application within a category known as RECHAR; a fund specifically aimed at the regeneration of areas where traditional industries (coal in this instance) have declined. The application described the aim of the project as follows:

To bring quality introductory training requiring up to date equipment in computing, keyboard skills, word processing and languages to the geographically remote RECHAR villages of Brotherton, Burton Salmon, Byram, Fairburn, Kellington, Sherburn-in-Elmet and South Milford.
(WEA ESF application)

The development officer was well placed to know about the problems of these communities as she had previously been responsible for running the adult education centre at Sherburn-in-Elmet when it was linked to the FE College. In the submission for funding she cited "isolated small communities" and identified the target population as "hindered by poor public transport ..... trapped within their communities by lack of private transport" and those people who "experience difficulty in accessing existing College and Training Centre courses where the barriers are geographical and/or personal." (WEA ESF application). The offer to potential students was a 10 week programme of five half-day sessions per week with two sessions being in basic computing applications, two sessions of something called 'New Directions' and one session of a modern language - Spanish. The 'New Directions' part of the programme was to do with confidence building and the development of personal, study and presentational skills. All components were designed to attract a qualification; RSA CLAIT for the computing, RSA Certificate in Business Language Competence at basic level for the Spanish and credits at levels 2 and 3 from the local Open College Network (the West and North Yorkshire Access Network) for 'New Directions'.

To date four courses have been completed enabling more than 40 people to gain new skills and qualifications and more are planned, including a course in the Summer term which would enable those who wish to to progress to higher levels. Once funding was agreed the biggest problem was to find suitable venues; the budget was not sufficient to allow the purchase of a mobile unit so all the lap-top computers and printers were going to have to be set up and dismantled for each session. It so happened that Selby District Council had had the wit to earmark houses on public estates in smaller villages for use as community centres and to provide purpose-built centres in larger villages and it was to this body that the organiser turned to seek use of these centres. Her request was agreed. Recruitment was through 'come and meet us' sessions in the very centres that were to be used and an extensive publicity campaign via schools, shops, post offices and libraries. Perhaps the most important point is that the courses are entirely free of charge to participants and in addition childcare costs are met.

During the time that I was in the area I managed to visit one of the courses and also to attend the presentation evening for those who had completed the first two courses. My impression was that the composition of the first two groups was different in two ways from the others; in the first place the earlier course was overwhelmingly subscribed to by young women whereas in the other group the average seemed to be older and also the gender mix was more evenly balanced. In talking to the students it became clear that the part of the programme that had attracted them was the information technology; they seemed to have been happy to try out the other parts of the course and in many cases claimed both to have enjoyed and benefited from them but if given a free choice would have wanted all computing. The other thing that was clear was that Teresa had been proved right in her assumptions about the nature of the area and the needs of the market. Students confirmed the problems they faced in getting access to training - cost, problems of public transport, childcare and dispositional attitudes towards formal providers - and expressed a great sense of relief and gratitude that somebody had recognised these problems and taken some practical steps to address them.

While I was talking to a group of students in the Spanish class the question arose as to whether the area could be described as rural. One of the students gave a very interesting answer; he said that it really depended on where you, as a local, looked towards; if you looked towards Selby then yes it was a rural area, if you looked towards Castleford and Pontefract then no, it was not. Rurality, like beauty, would seem to be in the eye of the beholder.

The evening presentation of certificates reminded me of why I had spent 25 years in adult education. It was a joy to be a participant again, even if a rather voyeuristic one, in something which celebrated learning and which affirmed people in such an important way. Many of the young women I spoke to had clearly gained so much in personal and skill development terms from the programme and were eager to go on learning and developing. Two of them recognised the important role that the WEA had played in giving them this opportunity and were, in their turn, working hard to establish a branch in their small town.

Castleford Women's Centre

The Castleford Women's Centre (CWC) is neither in North Yorkshire nor in a rural area so a case needs to be made for reporting on its activities in this research. There are a number of reasons for its inclusion: (a) some of the women who set up the Centre came from rural south Selby; (b) some of the users also come from this area; (c) the Centre has made a major impact on the area and the women have been asked to run two other Centres which are situated close to the County boundary and which serve mixed urban and rural areas; (d) the operation provides an unusual and infrequently found model of institutional support for a grass roots working class initiative; (e) when I spoke to one of the organisers on the telephone she was so full of enthusiasm for the place and so insistent that I should visit that I could not resist the opportunity.

The CWC was a direct consequence of the miner's strike of 1984/5 and the impact that this strike had on the lives of miners' wives and other women close to them. The women came together and formed 'women against pit closures' groups; a beautifully worked banner hanging in the CWC is emblazoned with the words "North Yorkshire Women Against Pit Closures". When the strikes ended many miners wanted the women to "go back to the kitchen sink" but some of the women had other ideas. A group of five, realising that there was very little educational provision in the area for women, approached the local authority for support. They were fortunate in finding a far-sighted senior officer who was prepared to take a risk and support the very embryonic project and who managed to secure £10,000 to enable the women to start their own centre. (They claim to have been so successful at persuading money from people that they still have £9,000 of this original start-up fund left.) They managed to find a suitable property near the town centre and set about doing it up while at the same time they canvassed opinion from other women about what was needed; the overwhelming response was 'education'. It is interesting to note that, having established the need for education, the first approaches for help were made to "the intellectuals who had helped in the strike" who were from the WEA and Leeds University.

The Centre, described in the publicity material as 'The University of Life', is a hive of activity and interest. The walls are covered in banners and notices all carefully and elegantly done by hand while the rooms are filled with people following a whole range of activities from craft related subjects to creative writing to part-time degree courses. The basement is the home for a crèche run, when I was there, by four young women volunteer helpers. Altogether some 1000

people use the Centre every week, though not all on courses since space is made available for groups such as 'Victim Support' to meet. The reception is in a room which also serves as a coffee bar and an atmosphere of warm outgoing friendliness is created which permeates the whole building.

The Northern College which was mentioned in the Derbyshire report has strong links with the CWC. (It should be noted that North Yorkshire does not subscribe to the Northern College.) The CWC has an annual weekend at the College where the subject matter is chosen by the women at the Centre and the College organise the programme and there are other opportunities for students from the Centre to make use of the staff and facilities there.

My guide to the Centre was one of the original five and her experience was not, I suspect, untypical of many working class women. She described vividly how she had been "put down" all her life, by her school, by her husband, but how, having discovered learning and the fact that she was not "stupid", she just wanted to know "everything". She has embarked on a part-time Certificate programme with Leeds University which will take two years. When she has finished that she intends to take the University's Diploma which will take a further two years by which time she will be ready to do the part-time degree - 5 years. She gave me a copy of the following piece of verse that she had written:

I'm only a person, I am only me
But have you any idea of what I want to be?
I might be unemployed, I might be old,
I might be disabled and have to be told;
But I have feelings that stir deep inside
That longs to escape, I still have my pride.
Don't pass me by or pat me on the head
As if I'm not there because I haven't read
All of the books you think makes me see
They haven't given you the insight to what is me.
We have contributions be them large or small
That gives us the right to have equality for all
Who knows eventually there could come the day
If you'd only listen to what I have to say.
I'm here, I'm waiting, ask me what I yearn
And you never know what perhaps you might learn.

As with the experience in Selby, I was witnessing not only a celebration of learning but also a celebration of the awareness that learning is possible. The common threads that bind these two projects are accessibility, cost and the absence of a formal institutional setting. All provision at the CWC is free of charge to participants and, once again, European funding plays a significant part.

There are other links with Training on Wheels and with the WEA. As part of the extension of the TOW programme a course is to be run in one of the new centres being operated by the CWC. Another link concerns a story about a weekend organised jointly by the WEA and the CWC. Apparently some of the more traditional members of the WEA were rather nonplussed by these working class women and to start with had some difficulty in coping. By the end of the weekend, however, the women had won the day and everyone was joining in their songs with a gusto.

In 1993 the CWC won the Outstanding Adult Learners group award in the 'competition' organised by the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education for Adult Learners' Week. It is also the base for the European Network of Women with women from the Centre attending meetings in Brussels on a regular basis. Once the veil of middle class domination and vested professional interest is lifted away and once affordable and accessible provision is made available, working class people's potential is liberated and the outcomes appear almost limitless. Can this only happen in urban areas?

6. Issue, Concerns and Questions

What I am intending to do in this concluding section is to pull together some of the themes that have emerged in the course of the research. The little academic training I received came at a time, the 60s, when big ideas and over-arching theories abounded. I do not think I was unique in any way among my fellow students in looking for a life explaining and life directing theory, preferably a radical one. That tendency is still, to some extent, with me to this day and I am having to resist the temptation to find a neat way of encapsulating, summing up, explaining what I have seen, heard and read about. I *will* resist because I have neither the ability nor the time to do so and in any case in these post-modern days I should try to follow Nigel Rapport's lead (Rapport, N., 1993) and present the material in 'juxtaposition without essence, without closure'.

North and South

As a resident of the south of England making, what was for me, a rare incursion into the north of England, a number of things struck me. The first was how easy it is to get a very one-dimensional view of the country and to begin to assume that things really are as they seem from the south-east. This is at least in part because the news these days is dominated by what the Government is doing and thinking. Programmes on television and radio present a consistently narrow, London/Westminster oriented view of events. Despite the growth of news and current affairs programmes, opinion and comment both in news programmes and in those commenting on and analysing the news is dominated by Government ministers and spokespeople of opposition parties. South-east England perspectives are constantly reinforced. North Yorkshire may only be two hours from London by train but it soon became clear to me that things could be and often were viewed differently from there. Many references have been made in this paper to tradition - something that was almost tangible, particularly but not exclusively in the more rural parts of the county - and this in turn seemed to be linked to what I can only call civic pride: the continued willingness, in the face of many and varied attempts by Westminster to apply correctives, to see public services and works as a contribution to the community rather than a drain on its resources. I am conscious as I report this of the other danger which is to romanticise the north of England as a haven of community spirit, as a place unaffected by the radical individualism of 80s politics. The truth is somewhere in between. No local authority has escaped the Government's financial constraints on public spending, no health authority has been unaffected by having to become market oriented, no area has been spared the impact of deregulated bus services but somehow these things get mediated through local cultures and value systems and the outcomes are not universally similar.

Another significant factor that has already been commented upon is the relatively low level of unemployment in most parts of the county. With the exceptions of Scarborough and Whitby there are no conurbations with high levels of long term unemployment and with that basket of social and economic problems that seem inexorably to go alongside them. Having said that, I did have a feeling that with unemployment, where there was some evidence for this assertion, and with some other aspects of life, perhaps North Yorkshire was just coming along later than other parts of the country. While I was in the county, for example, the Chief Constable's annual report had just been published and it was the subject of much discussion on the local radio. Most attention was being devoted to the statistic that drug related crime had risen by 25 percent in the previous year and in many of the comments there was an underlying sense of 'can this really be happening here in rural Yorkshire?'.

Rurality and rural deprivation

We are stuck in this country with a very pervasive popular image of rural life which is at least in part, but an important part, to do with a nostalgia for the past. This nostalgia is fed by strong images: the burgeoning number of shops selling greetings cards many of which carry photographs or illustrations of cottages, cottage gardens and other aspects of the rural idyll; television series like 'All Creatures Great and Small', 'One Man and His Dog' (interesting to note that the one woman to win this sheep dog trial and challenge the gender bias of the title is from the Dales) and 'Last of the Summer Wine'; Merchant-Ivory films. These images (codified into a sociological 'ideal type' by the concept of 'gemeinschaft') also convey a sense of homogeneity; the notion that all village life conforms broadly to a similar set pattern. Any subscription to this view would be instantly challenged by even the most superficial contact with the areas chosen for this case study, the Dales and south Selby. The other fallacy, of course, is that rural life impacts more or less equally on all members of the community. Study after study has shown this not to be the case.

> *...the typical village of a large part of England in the 1980s - a former landlord's mansion converted into flats, a handful of well-to-do farmers whose production methods are anathema to the bulk of the community, a middle class stratum that live in the village but are not of it, and those older-established local workers who form a disregarded minority relegated to the disdained fringe of late twentieth-century society.*
> (Mingay, G.E., 1989).

In a paper published in 1986, McLaughlin presents evidence drawn from surveys conducted as part of a project on deprivation in rural areas. This project looked at five areas chosen to represent different types of rural economy - a rural area within a metropolitan labour market, a remote rural locality (the Yorkshire Dales as it happens), an area of capital intensive agriculture (which could have been Selby but wasn't), an area of mixed farming with a high input of family labour and a high amenity coastal environment. Taking the supplementary benefit entitlement as the datum base and interviewing a 10 percent random sample of households, the research found that 25 percent of the households were living in or on the margins of poverty. The marginalisation of this group was further confirmed by inequality; 26 percent of the sample had disposable incomes at least three times *higher* than their supplementary benefit eligibility levels compared with a national average of 11 percent. In his research, which largely confirmed the findings of an earlier report commissioned by the Association of County Councils (1979), McLaughlin identified the major determinants of rural poverty thus:

> *Whilst the majority of the poor in rural areas are identified as elderly households living on state pensions as their sole source of income, the single most important factor determining the poverty status of other households is income poverty derived from low wages* (1986, p.5).

This finding is amply confirmed by the 'Farming Under Stress' survey mentioned earlier.

McLaughlin then goes on to illustrate from his research the linked problems of housing and local services but, in a radical departure from conventional wisdom, he offers the following challenge in his conclusion:

> *...the evidence available would tend to suggest that the explanations for the incidence of deprivation and disadvantage in rural Britain are more likely to be found in the patterns of social differentiation and stratification within rural society as they are in the context of declining services and facilities* (1986, p.13)

Commenting on this assertion with any sense of confidence backed by evidence is beyond the scope of this report. I would say, however that coming at the problem from this perspective is more a part of the agenda in the south of the county where I heard many more overt *and* coded references to social class as an issue than I did in the Dales; perhaps not surprisingly given the proximity of traditional working class urban areas. I do also want to make reference to this idea in subsequent sections.

Perhaps one of the most important challenges is to look at the extent to which aspects of rural deprivation are nothing more than rural symptoms of problems which are themselves not specifically rural.

Community Development

The extent to which a number of the principal agencies and organisations concerned with rural issues (Rural Development Commission, Yorkshire Rural Community Council, LEA Community Education, WEA, Churches, Age Concern) adopt or are thinking of adopting an approach to their work which could be summed up as 'community development' is well illustrated in this survey. This approach has a substantial pedigree in many fields of interventionist activity and a substantial literature so a brief caricature will suffice. Community development is a form of intervention which seeks to identify issues through local participants and which seeks to address these problems through consensual forms of action and through education. (The notions of process and product in relation to community education and community development were dealt with in the Cornwall case study.) Community development clearly has a value base but it is quite frequently presented as if it were value free. It is rare, in my experience, to find the sort of explicit statement expressing libertarian or socialist values that I found in some papers I received from the Yorkshire Arts Circus:

> *To encourage people in Yorkshire, especially working class people, to use the arts in their fight for economic, social and cultural equality.*
> (YAC Aims)

Appearances of neutrality usually cloak either ideologies that are conservative (recreate the lost community and social organisation through self-help and community care schemes) or

liberal/democratic (counteracting the remoteness and insensitivity of government through increased local organisation and communication). There is a view, and I suspect that if I had been able to spend longer in each area I might have subscribed to it, that projects like Training on Wheels and the Dales Partnership Project, which fit these last two descriptions, while being very successful at ameliorating conditions for people in rural areas, at the same time, do not make much impact on the more intractable structural problems of poverty and housing.

> *An approach which recognised the limitations of 'expressed need' in rural areas and adopted objectives on the basis of some definition of 'comparative' or 'normative' need might lead to the long term political aims of establishing minimum service thresholds, or securing adequate resources for villages to run their own services. The achievement of such objectives would require a 'community action' or 'political education' approach in order to challenge current perceptions of need, to encourage political action and to organise the 'marginal' individuals and groups across the country into a new political force. ... RCCs would have to develop away from their present unitary model towards a 'pluralistic' model, by accepting that there are legitimate competing interests and by providing information and technical expertise to alliances of action groups formed on an issue basis* (Benfield, G. 1990).

These ideas present a formidable challenge to the agenda of many agencies including the embryonic Community Education service in North Yorkshire, perhaps especially in remote rural areas where the ability of the community to hide things was well documented in the Farming Under Stress report and where community development work requires intensity and patience.

Funding from Europe

Wherever I went in North Yorkshire I was never far away from an EU funded project or discussion of EU funding. It is well known that finding a way around the plethora of different 'actions' can be something of a problem but many of the people that I met had overcome the problem not least, it seems, because the County Council in collaboration with others had set up a European Office which really worked. There was, for example, something approaching euphoria in the air over the successful joint Counties bid for 5b status which was going to bring £36m worth of European money into North Yorkshire over the next 6 years. The area around Catterick, so dependent on the presence of the military, was in receipt of KONVER funds to help mitigate the effects of reductions in the armed forces; a source of funding which, incidentally, the Careers Service was hoping to tap into to sustain its adult guidance network. As already mentioned, 'Training on Wheels' was set up with RECHAR money, a fund which has also been used to support the Castleford Women's Centre.

It is something of an irony that in a country with a Government so lukewarm about the European Union so many important projects should be sustained in this way. It seems likely that, for the foreseeable future, the EU will be a much more sympathetic place for the regions to look towards and it may well be a place where policies for regional development accord much more with those being put forward at a local level.

Women in Education

Much of this case study is concerned with women's education, some formal some very informal. Since Susan McGrath is contributing a section on the changing role of women in rural communities I do not propose to comment at any length; also my brief was not specifically concerned with the condition of women in rural areas and I can present no evidence in this regard. I also feel that as a man I have to tread lightly in this area.

Jane Thompson (1983) described what she saw as four responses of adult education to the emancipation of women:

1. *Total ignorance* - women are seen as housewives and consumers of male ideas and their social struggles remain off the educational agenda.

2. *Latter day philanthropy* - educational provision concentrates on women's deficiencies and inadequacies on the basis that they contribute to their own problems through fatalism and apathy.

3. *Respectable face of feminism* - focuses on equal rights and a belief in institutional change but makes women dependent on 'temporary subsidies' and puts them in competition with each other.

4. *Freedom of male control* - power of control over the learning process and what counts as knowledge is considered important.

I would be extremely hesitant to assign observed practices to these categories but it was instructive to have been able to compare two examples of Thompson's fourth category in action; the Castleford Women's Centre and the WI. One of these would almost certainly be seen by the women's movement as emancipatory and the other not. So what is going on here? Is it that the WI is, as its leaders would claim, an emancipatory organisation and that the conventional view that would locate it elsewhere is wrong? Could it be that the notion of 'freedom of male control' needs closer examination and that the WI, while not in any way being controlled by men, has been so successful because it is approved of by men and that as a result women are 'allowed' if not positively encouraged to join?

7. Epilogue

> *Imagine the honest, sober, reflecting portion of every town and village in the Kingdom linked together as a band of brothers, honestly resolved to investigate all subjects connected with their interests, and to prepare their minds to combat with the errors and enemies of society ... Think you a corrupt government could perpetuate its exclusive and demoralising influence amid a people thus united and instructed?*
> (William Lovett)

I think it could.

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Adult Education and the Changing Roles of Women in Rural Communities

Susan McGrath

Introduction

As a member of this advisory group for this project, and the only woman, I was constantly struck by the major role played by women shown in the material from all four areas studied, both as learners, staff and general commentators. This seeming gender imbalance was not new to me, nor to any other researcher in adult education, however two new questions formed in my mind:

If , as this research and my own work in previous studies indicate, the growth in rural employment will be in part-time work for women, what will be the impact upon local economies already well below national wage averages?

Will the growing professionalism of the voluntary organisations contribute to changes in the nature of women's social roles within the rural community?

Having considered these points, I then formulated the third, important question:

Are these changes occurring because of or in spite of the needs of rural women, and do we have to sub-divide along both gender lines *and* such categories as 'indigenous population' and 'incomers'? (There is also the question of how 'needs' can be defined, and whether or not they are actually 'wants'. In my experience of working with women, returning to learning can be instigated by a need - divorce, partner's unemployment, children's progression- but can then be developed into a want of more self development).

Mindful of the four statements of Jane Thompson, extracted by Mike Boice for the North Yorkshire study, I propose to look at the following common themes within the four case studies: issues of access; changes within the Voluntary Sector; employment trends; how these may affect delivery of AE provision.

I would also like to put forward, in revised form, a statement made by John Payne in the Derbyshire study. It does, I feel, encapsulate a key theme:

> *Women have become more active at all levels in the community and have greater aspirations for their own lives. At the same time many men are struggling to come to terms with the breakdown of long-standing social, political and cultural networks.*

Access

In a study I carried out for the Hastings and Rother Health Authority in 1990 on the support needs of rural women with children under five, I found
a high number of women who drive (but may have) limited access to a car during the week. (There was also) a severe lack of good public transport serving the villages and small towns,

especially during the evenings. What there is, is often expensive, at inconvenient times for their needs,and does not fit the complex journey patterns required by women with children at school and other commitments which may be spread over a wide geographical area (McGrath 1990, p.30).

These findings highlighted an earlier, smaller survey I carried out for the Rural Development Commission within the local Rural Development Area (McGrath 1989) which showed that 48.2 per cent of the survey sample, the majority of whom were women (290 = 100%), did not have their own transport and of the 48.2 per cent, 37.8 per cent did not drive. The Derbyshire study has produced the figure of 31.3 per cent of households with no car and it would have been interesting to break down the information on one-car families to find out who has the majority use.

It appears, therefore, that little has changed in four years regarding women's access to convenient, inexpensive rural transport, and that learning to drive is an important step to freedom of movement, but no guarantee. The cost of driving lessons was tackled by the enterprising rural Adult Education Centre in Leicestershire which offered group lessons to women. Such education does not tackle the ongoing costs of running and maintaining a vehicle. Whether urban or rural, women with their own cars are likely to have older models, in need of more attention. A local rural centre here in East Sussex has just began to run a summer term car maintenance class for women and this is well supported by women, and cars, of all ages. None of this, however, tackles the growing problem of pollution for rural and urban areas and other environmental damage such as increasing road development encroaching upon the countryside.

It is evident that women, with or without private transport, are less likely to want to travel to and from classes during the long winter evenings, Old cars are more likely to break down in country lanes; rural buses disappear after dusk; bus stops are rarely marked under the new, unrestricted privatised systems; bus shelters are often taken over by adolescents who have nowhere else to meet (one local parish council has had the seats removed from all the village shelters to discourage such gatherings, yet voted against the building of a youth club hut!).

Rye AE Centre (East Sussex) surveyed its registered students after a decline in numbers and found that elderly women, even those for whom transport was not an issue, were reluctant to come out to classes after dark, which in the winter means anything ending or beginning after 5.00 pm. Yet it is this age group who have consistently built up numbers in the past: what is different now? The answer may be the same as those fears expressed in the Cornwall self-defence class. If national statistics are accurate, rural crime rates are on the increase and whilst the growth appears to be in crimes against property and attacks directed at young men, lack of street lighting and evening transport contribute to women's concerns when considering if and when to attend adult education.

Another issue which is raised again and again when interviewing women on access problems is childcare. I am hesitant, therefore, to do this as I do not see it as a woman's issue per se but as a vital aspect of concern for society as a whole. Even the report researchers have inadvertently fallen into this accepted view when in Cornwall it is said that there is a nursery 'used by school staff and *local women'*. Whilst it can be labelled as only of concern to women, and mothers at that, childcare is easier to marginalise and ignore. In my current work as guidance co-ordinator at Hastings College where over 50 per cent of the students are over 25 and the current unemployment rate for the catchment area is 13.7 per cent, I am increasingly dealing with men who are single parents and whose childcare needs are equally urgent. Yet this report shows

once more that where convenient, affordable care is available ,the attendance of women on courses is encouraged and maintained. Such provision is doubly important in rural areas where distances between what care is available and the chosen learning centre can make the course out of the question. The provision and quality of childcare facilities may be increasingly important to parents, as at least two of my own research studies have shown. In the past women may have been able to rely on a network of friends or relatives but rural social care is changing, as this report indicates, and there is a discrepancy between what may be on offer: part-time provision maintained by the parents themselves, which makes it affordable but can make regular course attendance difficult, or privately run, all-day provision which is often beyond the financial reach of those in most need . This underlines the dilemma for Adult Education Centres, striving to provide a service which is both appropriate and economic yet also reasonably priced for those who wish to use it.

An example of this is Thomas Peacocke Community College in Rye which has opened a workplace nursery with help from the Rural Development Commission. There is a condition that 50 per cent of the places should be for the community use, the other 50 per cent for the LEA staff in the area. Adults attending classes at the college during the day have had problems in using this facility because they do not require full half-sessions but shorter slots to fit their class times. At £2 an hour, their fees do not compare with the £120 a week charge for a baby, yet their children count when staffing is allocated under the Children Act, thus limiting the number of full-time, full cost places available and threatening the viability of the nursery.

The final aspect of access I wish to consider is that of course fees which, like transport and childcare, have financial implications for both men and women but can impact more severely on women who are more often economically dependent on others and, if they are earning, bring home less than men. Since the development of the Further Education Funding Council and the incorporation of Further Education Colleges, there is a growing divide between access to traditional adult education, which includes what is often classified as 'leisure activities', and courses which lead to nationally recognised qualifications. The latter can attract funding and concessions whilst the former are full-cost. According to NIACE figures as reproduced in the *Education Guardian* supplement on adult education (*Guardian EG* 10 May 1994. p.3), the majority of adult education participants would be willing to pay more for their courses rather than see the increase passed on via local or national taxation. If only participants were canvassed, it is likely that they a) are already committed to the concept of AE; and b) able to afford to be so, (though it has been pointed out that some respondents did in fact identify cost as a barrier). It is harder to locate people who do not participate and then pinpoint reasons for non-participation, as this survey and much of my own work has proved (McGrath, 1992), but when non-participants or non-attendees from course are contacted, cost is commonly a major factor in their decision.

There is a move to encourage employers to contribute more to funding training or retraining, or as in the Derbyshire case study, introduce some basic education classes to enable unskilled workers to progress. Companies such as Ford, Rolls Royce and Rover offer their staff subsidised courses across a wide range of subjects. They have found that employees taking up an interest-based course for the first year will often go on to something more closely related to their work thereafter. If, however, it is left to major employers to boost AE funding, many women could loose out as their employment patterns would often exclude them from accessing many of the schemes. Rural women's chances of benefiting would be even more remote, literally .

I fear that these subsidy trends could be in danger of falling into Jane Thompson's trap of the 'respectable face of feminism', whereby courses to underpin the perceived employment trends in low-paid, female-orientated occupations attract the 'temporary subsidies' and the childcare, and thus narrow choice and self-development. In the Cornwall study it is evident that high-skilled and therefore male-dominated courses can attract employers and full-cost fees, leaving the women with the 'second chance. second rate' provision.

Another gender bias is revealed in this field in the term 'returner' and I am guilty of using it myself when advertising courses. 'Returners' can attract European Social Funding, TEC funding and other sources of subsidy and term implies that women have been cut off from everything in the real world, not just paid work. The prefix is commonly attached to courses leading into qualifications recognised by employers: we do not see 'Returners to English Literature' or 'Returners' Yoga' in prospectuses and "returning to learning" courses are difficult to classify under Schedule 2 unless directed towards Access or recognised FE qualifications. If rural women on low wages, or on income support as single parents, wish to learn, they may well have their choices narrowed by financial constraints and the inducement to take a vocational course which has attracted a subsidy, which means the centre can afford to run it on small numbers.

The Role of Women Within the Voluntary Sector

In the Yorkshire case study Mike Boice suggests that:

> *Once the veil of middle class domination and vested professional interest is lifted away and once affordable and accessible provision is made available, working class people's potential gets liberated and the outcomes appear almost limitless. Can this only happen in urban areas?*

It may be harder to define cultural shifts in rural communities in such political terms but I wish to consider two important areas in which rural women are, however unwillingly, becoming politicised, and to ask whether these changes will have wide ranging and long-term effects.

As shown by the Yorkshire study, the role of the Women's Institute in rural life still labours under the stereotypical image of hats, jam and Jerusalem, yet the WI can seem positively progressive when set against its breakaway organisation the Yorkshire Countrywomen's Association. In ACRE's (Action with Communities in Rural England) *Country Viewpoint Magazine* for October 1993, Heather Mayall, the then General Secretary of the National Federation of Women Institutes, spelled out the WI's aims as:

> *providing opportunities for friendship and for learning, widening horizons, working to improve the quality of life..... It contributes to community life and it also contributes leaders to the community* (p.13).

This comment was effectively balanced by another article in the same magazine which commented on the changes in rural life:

> *Some of the barriers to effective, balanced and equitable rural policies lie in the hears and mindsof rural people themselves. What is needed is a real concern for a sense of mutual respect welcome and caring for all rural people. Local people and groups need to catch this vision and run with it or else socio-cultural marginalisation will be as problematic in*

> *the future as political-economic marginalisation has proved to be in the past* (Clarke, Paul, p.3).

It seems that the traditional channels through which such activities highlighted by these statements may have been disseminated are not happening or are happening in a different way from how things worked in the past. If we look at the WI, it is clear that the pool of new leaders is shrinking. Anne Stamper, former WI trainer and now a freelance consultant (an example of one trend I wish to highlight) drew my attention to the dearth of 30 to 40 year old women coming into the organisation and on to the ladder of leadership. It is this age group which is now seeking paid employment for the same reason as its urban counterparts: unemployment of partners, family economics in general, single-parent responsibilities and the fact that this generation is more likely to have had careers throughout or prior to parenthood. A particular problem which has been highlighted to me is that of a Women's Royal Voluntary Service branch whose driver pool for Meals on Wheels and hospital visits is reliant on drivers in their seventies and even eighties. The current leadership and membership within many WI branches are well into retirement age with few coming along to participate in, or manage, future groups. For every branch that offers a day and an evening group to attract those women who are working outside the home, there is a branch which is facing closure due to falling numbers. When it works, however, the WI and its Denman College structure can offer personal growth and confidence within a supportive, woman-centred framework. A recommendation in a recent report on "*Caring for Rural Carers*", compiled by the WI (1993), offered to provide a bursary to make it possible to attend a course at Denman College on a subject of interest.

The WI may therefore be the accepted face of feminism within the rural community as it is increasing the recognition of transferable skills, and just listen to what it's doing for Clarrie Grundy in 'The Archers'!

Anne Stamper is also instrumental in another innovative venture which may transform learning for rural women and which is directly linked to what I see as a major development in the changes within the community. 'Care in the Community' has placed increased demands on carers, the majority of whom are women. It was noted in *Caring for Rural Carers* that 87 per cent of carers are women and that:

> *Women already experience disruptive work patterns and receive proportionately less income than men. They may have their opportunities further limited by the responsibilities that they have as unpaid carers.* (Women's Institute 1993, p.3)

In country areas where access to day centres and other resources is limited, the burden is likely to become overwhelming for many. What the government policy has also done is to professionalise those voluntary organisations charged with organising more and more provision, as they try to cope with the growing demands on their resources. This is at a time when the traditional source of volunteers is shrinking. Unwaged women in their 30s and 40s and people retiring early are now often seeking paid full or part-time work.

An incentive for volunteers and a way of training for a more professional approach is to offer some form of Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) or Assessment of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL), linked to the National Vocational Qualifications. The WI piloted the RSA Advanced Diploma in the Organisation of Community Groups, which Anne Stamper developed

and which is now available nationally through various voluntary organisations. Here in East Sussex it is offered through the Sussex Rural Community Council via the volunteer training co-ordinators and can be linked to higher education qualifications. Assessment and learning can be achieved by distance packages and peripatetic assessors, thus keeping travel for the candidate to a minimum. Whilst not an NVQ, this course has a parallel structure and can be similarly accredited to comparable NVQ's. Two of its selling points as listed in publicity material is that it is for those working in the voluntary sector and seeking promotion or considering returning to work [*sic*] after a break. (RCC leaflet). Through this scheme, women can gain recognition for voluntary work and have currency in paid employment.

However, such schemes could reduce voluntary workers as women can now use such voluntary work as a training ground for professional development, whereas in the past they stayed to organise and train others, voluntarily. This will, I believe, have a greater impact on rural communities where there is still a great reliance on women working voluntarily to support that community and where there are fewer other sources of support, such as the young of both sexes or men who would willingly be identified within the community as not in paid work, who might come forward to fill in the gaps left by women as they move into paid work. As a recent article in the Society section of the *Guardian* (Wednesday 11 May 1994) shows, volunteers can no longer be solely regarded as 'Right wing or as a free Lunch': politically conservative and a cheap source of labour. The changes within the voluntary sector are affecting rural women, who are beginning to re-evaluate their role within the community. In turn, the sources and nature of 'community' in rural life are changing.

Identified Learning for Rural Women with the Context of the Rural Economy

A large proportion of unpaid agricultural work in the past was that done by farmers' wives. Even the running together of these words produces a collective image in the minds of everyone, town or country-dweller, emphasising the idea that women marrying farmers automatically took on a recognised role within the farming community, as well as entering the mythology of children's books and advertising. In the Cornwall study, John Payne noted that, today, this is becoming less common, in a world where many younger women have developed their own career structures and are less willing to relinquish them. There is also less opportunity for those women to give up paid employment, if they have it, during a time of agricultural change, when farming incomes are dropping and, like many families, there is a need for an additional income.

Many wives of farmers run businesses which are still closely linked to the farm, such as bed and breakfast, holiday cottage lets, shops or catering supplies. These all have training needs, whether it be the Health and Hygiene Certificate, book-keeping or French for beginners. These are examples of courses requested when I was the outreach worker within the Rye and Romney Marsh Rural Development Area between 1990 and 1993.. Within a two-mile radius of where I am sitting typing out this paper, (a village of 420 people) I know of a farmer's wife who is a volunteer co-ordinator for this area (a salaried post), one who is a pharmacist, another who is a primary school teacher: only one farm in this vicinity has a couple who both farm. There is also Linda McCartney, of course: another working wife!

This seeming hive of activity helps to hide a common rural problem: the hidden numbers or women who live below the poverty line, whether in a low-wage family or no-income situation,

where there is little opportunity or point to seeking paid employment. Because of the way the benefits system is organised, problems arise if casual income rises above £15 a week whilst signing on and it is a complex process to sign on and off benefits for temporary work. Women's earnings will also be deducted from partners' benefits. Set against the 'high income-high skills' of wealthier indigenous families or incomers, the learning needs of women within this poverty trap are often overlooked by predominantly middle-class orientated provision. When I have surveyed women in these situations, my findings equate with those in the four case studies. Many had disastrous experiences at school and do not wish to access adult provision which, because of lack of choice or suitable centres, is offered within the very same institutions they left at 15 or 16. They are also more likely to meet opposition from family and friends who in the words of one respondent's spouse felt she was getting above herself even to consider "going back to school".

Yet, when looking at qualification levels of rural women across the socio-economic groups. I found they often left school with higher levels of basic qualifications than their male counterparts (Uplands Community College Survey 1992). In the 21 to 45 year old age range, 22 out of 63 men questioned within a small rural area had no formal qualifications at all. This is the group that find it harder to get back into employment as their unskilled jobs disappear. Women wanting or needing to resume study or paid work need their confidence building and their past and present skills revalued, and the Responsive College Unit has produced a learning resource pack to enable assessment to gain credibility within a developing NVQ structure, thereby securing funding for what otherwise may be seen to hover around the 'women's studies' framework and thus be marginalised. As a distance pack which can be used on a one-to-one basis, it is ideal for use in rural communities and could be seen as a useful addition to the RSA Diploma route.

One answer often put forward to rural women's needs for learning and paid employment is to provide the means to do all this at home: open learning or teleworking. Every conference I have attended on these issues come round to these solutions at some point, and the number of women questioning these assumptions never decreases. This may echo Jane Thompson once more and her concern about men's of control over women's agenda. It is constantly said (mostly by male delegates) that working at home is the answer to childcare problems. Women who work at home (and I have been one of them) know that to work effectively, childcare in or out of the home is still necessary. There are, happily, an increasing number of men (my partner included) who are realising this as they begin to work from home. Homeworking is still likely to offer stereotyped, low-paid occupations to women, such as keyboarding, assembly work or garment finishing. A recent survey conducted for the National Group on Homeworking has given the current estimate of 1 million homeworkers, 95 per cent of whom are women. The largest employer is still the textile industry and whilst teleworking is growing, it still does not guarantee better pay or conditions than the traditional occupations: the average wage of a homeworker in the survey was just under £1.20 per hour. Training to achieve higher level work is difficult to find on a distance learning basis and where it is available it is often more expensive than the traditional course, as the learning packs cannot always be included within the subsidised funding. Studying or working from home does nothing to change the isolation felt by many rural women and if it is increasingly introduced, single unit workplace and study centres will prevent them still further from meeting together with others within the community. Telecottages (a quaint name for a modern concept), where training and employment can take place on a small scale within villages and small towns could provide a compromise alongside the rural adult education centres, but they are often set up with pump-priming money and must become self-financing in time, thereby often leading to the two-tier system highlighted in the

Derbyshire study: commercial ventures geared to the needs of business whilst other non-profit-making ventures work on a shoe-string to support the needs of the rest of the community.

All the figures produced in this report's case studies confirm those produced by the Rural Industries Sector Advisory Group for Sussex, supported by Sussex TEC, Sussex RCC and the Agricultural Training Board ('Kitchen Table Dramas' - Summary of National Group of Homeworking Survey, Guardian, Wednesday 15 June 1994). A decline in full-time employment for men, an increase in part-time female employment and an increasing skills gap in business and management-related skills indicate the economic changes that will have an inevitable outcome for women. If wages for men in rural areas are already below the national average and women's wages fall even lower than these, what impact will a growing, lower income base have on these communities? How will women gain access to adult education, for their own self-development or for their employment if they become the main income providers, yet the family income is decreasing? Who will care for the children, the elderly and the disabled if there is no funding to provide care? Who will service the voluntary sector as the demands increase for women to be visibly economically active? Once women have the means to value their skills within the framework of a society that only seems to do this in financial terms, will they remain in their traditional roles?

I need to refer back to my original questions. If women do not seek to set the rural agenda, then the decline in the rural economic structure will continue, and it will change to the detriment of what is worth preserving in rural communities such as indigenous economic activity within a caring environment. There is a hope that, even if it has not been the aim of the policy makers, the new scope for women's development through the voluntary sector will empower women, and though change takes longer in the countryside (you need to give ideas at least a year, if not three), there is a real change in the role of women taking place. Among women's groups in rural communities there is a common recognition that though they may come from different social strata within these, they share the sense of urgency for self-discovery and progression and that adult education can be beneficial in this process.

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Reflections

John Lowerson

Much of what follows will draw together the common elements of the field studies. It will also attempt to place them in a cultural and operational context, adding to their insights, suggesting areas which they could not cover and offering reflections which might help form the agenda for a further programme of research. This latter is done less with the idea of a self-justifying bid for further funds than in the awareness that ours is only a contribution to debates with much wider ramifications.

Adult education, however defined, and there are some clear indications in the component parts of this report, is itself part of a complicated web of social relationships and ideologies. What prompts much of our thinking is that there is a sense of crisis in rural adult education which is no longer subdued; there is a new sense of urgency and of opportunities' being lost.

Into a Battlefield

In English thinking the rural is essentially contested territory; literally, in terms of the changing uses of space, and metaphorically, because of the complexity of our modern value structures. It may be symptomatic of the nature of higher education's own sense of crisis in the latter years of this century that a growing amount of academic time and effort is being expended on attempts to define and study the English rural community (Short 1992; Cloke 1994). It and the countryside are now widely recognised as of central importance for the English psyche (Colls and Dodd 1986). For some observers this has meant its being a spiritual resource for coping with urbanism and social change (Lowerson 1992, 1994).

For others its supposed cultural hegemony lies at the heart of England's persistent problems with industrial modernisation and economic growth; the potential industrial elite is held to prefer hunting and country houses to the toughness of the boardroom and the factory floor. Power dressing is expressed in Barbour jackets and green wellies as well as in sharp suits. One paradox which demonstrated only too clearly the inadequacy of such a simplistic linking was Lord King's combination of regular foxhunting with the ruthless leadership of British Airways; or was he the exception who proved the rule? (Wiener 1981)

There certainly is current a sense of rural crisis, both in the countryside itself and among many external commentators; it is multi-layered and variegated. Pressures on the actual environment as a space for urban refreshment with aesthetic and ecological values (the Twyford Down case comes to mind as does the A27 widening debate in Sussex) do not impinge directly upon our study but road construction and the directions of rural employment shifts do. For instance, many Peak District quarry workers are forced to commute into the National Park to work since much local housing has been taken over by middle-class commuters or holidaymakers.

There is a long-running debate as to what rural England is really 'for' in a predominantly urban society which may have a much-shrunken manufacturing base but whose service economy and cultural concerns now permeate most of the relatively small English landscape. Raymond

Williams did much to highlight the importance of this in literary presentations and more recent studies have built on this (Williams 1975).

Clearly English agriculture feeds townspeople as well as its own employees but its role in doing that has declined considerably since the highly protected and subsidised productivity of the decades immediately following the Second World War gave way to pan-European policies, with a heavy but diminishing level of public support, and the overproduction of crops which could not satisfy a market of rapidly changing food tastes. It is still, however, widely assumed to be the major determinant of rural life despite a continued decline in its actual role as an employer - now some 1.5% in overall terms and only 10% of rural dwellers.(Sinclair 1990; Derounian 1993, p.16). Here I am already slipping almost unconsciously into a word-use which elides two constructs as supposedly identical -'countryside' and 'rural'. The latter has a very long history from its Latin base as the alternative to the urban, whose very small scale allowed for a spatial as well as a cultural distinctiveness in pre-modern societies, although there has been a far greater separation since the onset of the Industrial Revolution. But 'countryside' is something else, a visually and spiritually-resourced landscape existing as a briefly observed and remembered personal experience or rendered into icon by books, photographs and cheap copies of works from John Constable to Paul Nash.(Lowerson 1992) The term emerged as a significant mode of describing much of England during the sixteenth century and late Victorian and Edwardian observers of a threatened idyll fixed it there in ways still difficult to escape. Its supposed population was also constructed to meet this myth rather than finely observed *in situ*; in both word and picture country people were frequently stereotyped to reinforce either paternalism or nostalgia (Boyes 1993).

The rural may be idealised in many ways but it is also in tension with the 'urban', oppositional as well as reinforcing or justifying. When he published his seminal work, *Garden Cities of Tomorrow,* almost a century ago Ebenezer Howard described the town and country as two separate and powerful magnets. Each had virtues, each had disadvantages. Howard recognised that a return to the very small-scale, scattered life of the rural would be impossible so he offered a new synthesis - the rural virtues would redeem the necessary urban structures. He influenced most of the planning of new towns in this century, with the alarming exception of the perversion of Le Corbusier's thinking in the 'tower block' era of the 1960s. But what he did not foresee was the extent to which the remaining parts of rural England, outside his new cities, would be drawn into an urban net. What he hoped for, the disappearance of the worst parts of rural life, isolation and poor services, has not happened and this study joins a considerable number of others in reminding us of that. One must point out here that this is, of course, relative to the immediate historical context but many long-term structural problems remain (Howard 1902; Bell 1969).

One of the most important reasons for this, apart from a shift in economic dependence to more distant foci than local hinterland centres, has been in what Paul Cloke calls the 'commodification' of the rural. Here, the countryside and its inhabitants are given attributes and an economic and social role which may be distinctly at odds with the intrinsic and indigenous and with some local aspirations. From being the primary sector of economic life, producing the raw materials of human existence, much of the rural has shifted in England to the outer corners of a tertiary economy. There it is seen largely as a leisure resource which is not, in itself, necessarily bad. Without it, depopulation would have proceeded even further. A key role for the countryside is now as a place to be consumed in temporary forays from large towns (Cloke 1994, p.168ff.).

It has also become a *locus* for flight not from the inner city but from the suburbs, largely for people who, having bought an idyll, are prepared to preserve and protect it for their own benefit. The long-established tensions between incomers and natives run through our field studies. And there is also the frozen world of the heritage industry, a species of cultural cryogenics if ever there was one, where people play out a past which never existed for the benefit of those who are often not too happy about their present. From some of the projects of the National Trust and English Heritage to farms' pretending to a horse economy which they can only sustain on admission fees, their only virtue is that they maintain some local employment. They are often portrayed as a symbol of rural resourcefulness and economic diversification but we are left with the dilemma as to how far the production of the unreal can be either satisfying or valid in the long run; is there more to rural life than providing an extra-urban theme park? (Hewison 1987; Wright 1985) Or is that thought too much a mixture of a moralising nostalgia with neo-Utilitarianism, a reflection of views of adult education's role in society which have not grown much since R. H. Tawney?

It is always deceptively easy to deal with such problems on a general 'English' scale. After all, the actual physical area involved is small by many European, let alone wider, standards; two-fifths of the space of France for instance. One key issue, much reiterated by rural historians, is that the national must always be moderated significantly by the regional and even the local. Such a view determined the choice of locales for our field studies.

Into Unknown Regions?

There is a long and largely not very fruitful debate about what constitutes an English 'region'. At least one previous attempt (by the University of Leeds) to discuss some of the problems we investigated stuck rather safely to a definition limited by the employing university's supposed sphere of influence. (Murphy 1993) Its very seeking after operational convenience seems to have aroused problems which restricted its responses and prevented a satisfactory outcome. We outlined the reasons for our selection at the beginning of this report; they were also prompted by operational convenience but that was secondary to the needs for comparison. We tried to recognise the inherent regional varieties which underpin most of the English experience. That gave us a certain procedural advantage in that most of our work was done at a distance from Sussex, so that our enquiries were less at risk from the complexities of local policies, hidden agendas and tensions between providing bodies. In the case of East Sussex, though, our researcher John Payne was actually an 'outsider'. Generally speaking, underlying geological formations are prime determinants of geographical regions, affecting settlement, communications, climates and so on. North Yorkshire and Cornwall demonstrate this extremely clearly. Soil patterns as well as communications affect local productivity but are repeatedly moderated by changing economic patterns on a greater scale. None of our regions has remained unaffected by these, nor by demographic shifts.

These are statements of the obvious but the virtually inescapable academic hunt for complication masks them frequently. To talk, for instance, of geology as affecting standardised national media output may seem far-fetched(except in terms of the receivability of certain broadcasts in poor reception areas) but it and its related factors do influence attitudes in response to and moderation of the values being transmitted from national to local contexts. I shall return later to the issue as to whether we can speak convincingly any longer of a 'rural'

mindset. Here I am reminding us of the role of the spatial as well as other components in affecting our patterns of provision.

Within broadly defined regions('East Anglia', 'West Country' and so on), let alone in the 'shire' counties which we used as an operating convenience for our overall target areas, there are cultural micro-climates as well as physical ones. When one respondent talked of a 'real sense of isolation' in East Sussex, with its comparative metropolitan closeness and its widely assumed affluence, she reiterated a theme we found elsewhere. It was not just the fact of poor road links in the Dales of Derbyshire and Yorkshire which illustrated this. There was a sense that present policies in government provision continued to turn away from what was going on there: its talk is almost always of the 'national' requirements for energy, training and so on.

The oft-repeated governmental claims for local accountability seem to be better aimed at the oligarchies of sizeable urban populations, admittedly the predominant English experience, rather than meeting the issues which face many rural areas. There comes a point where 'decentralisation' as a feasible process stops far short of local needs. This is exacerbated further by the paradoxical accompaniment of a growing level of directive decisions from Whitehall.

Local rural centres are often suffering in this because they are either difficult to service adequately without higher levels of sustained funding or because, quite simply, they are practically invisible in the calculations of those for whom cost-effectiveness requires resource concentration. What many rural regions are experiencing is the paradox if not downright opposition between claims that facilities are being devolved and their actual concentration, with resultant difficulties over both cost and access as they are siphoned away to larger centres.

One issue that has surfaced repeatedly during this work has been the sense of uncertainty over the future of already overstrained levels of provision, let alone the possibility of significant development in adult education. It is only twenty years since the last major reorganisation of local government, undoing much of the late Victorian county and local structures, impacted unevenly throughout the country. There ensued at least a decade of the readjustment of provision which fell, in turn, victim to repeated entrenchment from the later 1970s. It was a process well in hand before the Conservative election victory of 1979 but the resultant policies have done much to exacerbate the problems.

In the assumedly prosperous South East one has only to compare the fluctuating fortunes of adult education provision in Kent, East Sussex, West Sussex, Surrey and Hampshire to become aware of disturbingly uneven levels of provision and response to need. This is often complicated where, as in the case of our micro-study in East Sussex, a local region straddles two county boundaries; and the hinterlands of several of the region's further education providers recognised after the 1989 Education Acts.

Now, already weakened county and district councils are threatened with replacement by the oddly-named 'unitary authorities' in yet another review. We are told that the shire counties, with the likely exception of the much-unloved Humberside, will be kept for 'ceremonial purposes'. This latter-day recognition of Bagehot's constitutional division between the 'dignified' and the 'efficient' would perhaps be acceptable if the new units could be expected to be efficient, something the subject of fierce debate. They are unproven elements and the cost of effecting the changes is likely to mean less money's being available for other budgets.

Many existing counties have already dismantled the slim support facilities for adult education they provided as they responded to the required devolution of responsibility to local management schemes or the regional centres for bidding to the Further Education Funding Council, another instrument of centralised control. In the process many key organising staff took the route of 'early retirement', that singular euphemism of recent years. It is both ironic and to our benefit that one of our field researchers became available for just that reason. But there has been a general loss in expertise and coordinating flexibility, with little redeployment or replacement. The 'Cinderella' world of adult education is even further from going to the ball. When that is linked to the wholesale ignoring of local loyalties, whether indigenous or acquired by incomers, the problems can only increase. To professional isolation, uncertain funding and repeated operational discontinuities are being added other problems. The likelihood of growing fragmentation seems inevitable. The paradox is, as our North Yorkshire study shows, the fashionable emphasis on 'community provision' may be counter-productive, weakening what is already there. Devolution is not being matched by the actual higher funding required to replace what is being lost. This issue will be addressed further when I discuss the level of responsiveness to new initiatives later in this piece. Administratively convenient regions may not meld easily with the realities of local perceptions, mobility patterns and actual needs.

'Urban' and 'Rural': alternatives or continuum?

It is relatively easy to define the rural in terms both of small settlements, however interconnected, and the spatial distribution of population, to recognise the interplay of landscape and locality. Our work has done that because it has a long tradition of investigation on which to build. But there are other elements which are less easy to define but which are central to many of the assumptions with which we began and have refined as the work progressed. I began by recalling the historical patterns of oppositional assumptions. In these the 'rural' is both an institution, agricultural or extractive, with settlements dwarfed in acreage by their land, regionally varied(geologically, climatically, in terms of land-use, and in speech patterns). But is also has been given other values - it is regarded as the repository of 'Nature', offering a high-quality life style, defined in terms of health, recreation, security from crime and violence, mutual support networks and so on. Many of these latter have acted as a strong magnet for ex-urbanites, whatever the actual local experience may be. There is a strong emphasis in this process on the 'real' of the countryside, rather than the 'artificial' of the urban. It is something to be 'preserved' or, supposedly more constructively, 'protected' or 'conserved'.

This ascription has, however, enjoyed rather more than a century of questioning. Much of the late Victorian nostalgia for the rural emerged because it was perceived as being rapidly destroyed by advancing industrialisation and a rootless commercial and urban culture. Bodies as similar and as widely separated as the National Trust, the Council for the Preservation (now 'Protection') of Rural England, Rural Community Councils, the Women's Institutes and the Workers' Educational Association, let alone the entire folk-song and dance, archaeological and local historical networks, have all tried to strengthen rural life as a national resource. Adult education has been one means towards this end. Local education authorities came into this activity rather unevenly, using local schools and the village halls that government finance boosted on top of local paternalism after the First World War to provide 'evening classes'.

In the case of the latter it was often simple qualifications that were offered, paradoxically helping many on their way out of the countryside towards urban life. Since the 1960s,

recreational groups have come to play a larger role. But the vulnerability of 'flower arrangement on the rates' has been demonstrated increasingly.

These various initiatives combined with views fostered both by local newspapers and specialised magazines, such as *The Countryman*, *The Dalesman*, *Country Living* and, a new addition in our own area as I write, *Downs Country*, to reinforce the idea that a distinctive rural culture was still surviving despite all the threats posed by the impact of the railways, the internal combustion engine, the cinema and the BBC. The lures of urban artifice have been lampooned in such works as *Cold Comfort Farm* (just refilmed for TV in East Sussex) but there has remained the sense that there is a 'real England' somewhere out there in the green parts of the landscape (Gibbons 1932). So strong is this that one such countryside, created for broadcasting, has come to represent for many millions both the continuity and sometimes the painful adaptability of the rural as an alternative to the urban. *The Archers,* a radio 'soap opera' without the advertisements which gave the *genre* its name, has kept the idea strongly alive; issues of conservation feature rather more than they did originally but the older ideal still underpins the increasing treatment of contemporary social questions (Laing 1992; *The Times*, 28 September 1994).

In many senses, though, there has been an 'urbanisation' of rural England in a far more pervasive form than any of the influences mentioned so far. The major impact of television since the later 1950s has meant that the dominant mass cultural forms are not only urban in their focus but also supranational in much of their conception and provision. One has to be careful here not to fall into the wholesale moralising and counter-productive berating of mass culture which Richard Hoggart and other critics developed and which formed such an important part of the socially-critical syllabus of 1960s liberal adult education. Too much time has been spent in decrying the medium rather than meeting the opportunities it has offered. Much adult education, rural as well as urban, has been strengthened both by specialist programmes (note the literacy campaigns) and by exploiting other props for distance learning - the Open University opened opportunities for country-dwellers whilst many traditionalists were entangled in their own jeremiads. This was something we noticed particularly in Cornwall.

The issue, however, is the extent to which a totally generic rural culture can be said to have diminished because of the supposedly urban-focussed concerns of the one medium which is near-universal in availability and take-up. There is insufficient data currently to demonstrate such a case, although it clearly cannot be ignored. Television may, in many circumstances, have done rather more to reinforce continued rural residence rather than act as a draw towards the town, simply because of its predominantly domestic use. It often contrasts, whether deliberately or not, urban squalor with the rurally idyllic. In our own area, Meridian Television continues to present peak-time programmes , 'Country Ways', which offer moving-picture versions of the still photographs of so many 1930s guidebooks; the company actually publishes glossy books to accompany the broadcasts. The point is, a medium often accused of tending to homogeneity is probably moderated by the local circumstances in which it is watched.

Our surveys hint at a multitude of local experiences which make rural England, and the necessary responses to it, as varied as the sense of 'multi-culturalism' which has attracted so much focus for urban provision. The problems arising from the presence of and reactions to ethnic groups are less in most instances but there exist other patterns of local division which can be just as strong. Not far from this university, for instance, there are two neighbouring villages with considerable outward similarities; idyllic layouts and Downland Scarp settings

combine with great estates and well-preserved grand houses (of financial necessity open to a 'heritage'-greedy public) to offer all the components for an assumed standardisation of the 'rural community'. But there the resemblance ends. There has been a considerable and painful rivalry between the inhabitants, which shows little sign of abating, since the landowners took opposite sides in the Civil War. Any well-meaning adult education or community worker who moved in to bring them together for joint and 'cost-efficient' activities without considerable groundwork would soon come to grief. The need to recognise such local complexities is an issue to which we shall return.

A Distinctive Mindset?

Envisaging the possibility of a 'mongrel' rural culture betrays a lingering sense of an idealised pre-lapsarian rustic purity threatened by urban viciousness. This is, of course, a caricature but it is singularly pervasive and probably underpins more policy formation than many practitioners would openly admit.

There is, however, an issue in terms of 'barriers' to participation in various courses which we discussed but were not really able to address because of the time/finance limits on our research programme. This is that of whether a distinctive and pervasive 'rural mindset' can be said to exist. It is widely supposed to do so both in popular culture and in media stereotypes. The demise of *Punch* and the death of Benny Hill have reduced outlets for 'yokel' caricatures significantly, although they still provide some fodder for both newspaper and television derivatives. A recent advertisement for postal deliveries on the Classic FM radio channel built on this with a clearly 'thick' cowman lamenting in standard 'Mummerset' English his failure to become an astronaut because he had not sent his application by Recorded Delivery.

The symbiosis between improbable sources for amusement and widespread cultural assumptions is not easily established. In any case they are largely designed for urban consumption. But it would be interesting to enquire, for instance, how many rural dwellers identify characters such as Seth in the television 'soap', *Emmerdale*, or any of the *Archers*' Grundy family, with individuals they know personally. The tension between individual character portrayal and cultural stereotype is difficult to resolve but remains pervasive. The replies of some of our key respondents hinted at this in their perceptions of both opportunities and barriers to learning takeup. It was usually easier for them to do this by describing 'incomer' characteristics and letting some of the indigenous ones appear by default.

In most cases these views, even from sympathetic practitioners, remain those of outsiders whose interlocking of professional practice and ethical drive makes them positively evangelistic. It is inevitable that, apart from the often secondary issue of personal career advancement through a record of successful provision, our key respondents are committed to the idea of adult education as a 'good' in terms far more value-laden than the 'product' assumptions of much current educational management. We slip rather easily into language such as 'empowerment', something Clarrie Grundy is offered up as achieving elsewhere in this report; note also the current oral history project on the *Archers*. Behind these views, though, there often lies the disguised paternalism which even the supposedly egalitarian Tawney never escaped.

Occasionally there are hints in the responses of a gentler awakening, a sensitivity to localness and local needs. I should say here that many of the respondent observations were about

previous mistakes in over-ambitious approaches - if anything, our helpers proved remarkably aware of the changing needs of both individuals and communities in their areas. Perhaps that is why they were so helpful in the first place - we offered what is often a too rare opportunity for reflection on practice in a wider context. Yet there was often a sense of frustration colouring their observations which had deeper roots than the current worries about finance and organisation.

This leads back again to the question raised in the heading. Is there a distinctive 'rural mindset' which, as well as producing specific educational needs which are different from urban ones, might also act as a barrier to participation? The 'yokelising' I outlined above actually encourages such a view but it is, in the favourite words of university history tutors, 'much more complicated than that'. The sense of an internalised resistance both in individuals and communities which encourages isolation is difficult to establish without a different sort of enquiry from ours. It is, with presumably rare exceptions, very selective in its operation; widespread television is acceptable, for instance, where an adult education class would not be. Community has other bonds than the formally cooperative with which most provision is concerned and we were not able to explore those in this project (Wright S. 1992).

Many responses to rural life since the late Victorian onset of considerable rural depopulation(now reversing in many areas) have taken it almost as a given that most country people form a 'rump' which is more resistant to change than those who expressed mental liveliness by migrating. There might be a grain of truth in this but it ignores the forces of specific choice which encourage resistance to mobility - family ties, appreciation of local landscapes, the deep attractions of familiar place and so on. Not all resistance is produced by a fear or dislike of the unknown, even where 'foreigners' start at the next village. There may, of course, be other restrictive factors, limited employment prospects elsewhere, housing difficulties etc., which combine with the more positive elements to produce resistance.

The difficulty that now arises is the relationship between these issues and the perception of 'needs' (a local given or an outsider-determined), and participation or not in attempts to meet them. The barriers imposed by distance, cost, climate etc. are well detailed. But to what extent is there a specific rural form of 'cognitive dissonance', or even regional variations of this internalised refusal to accept a sense of need and possible remedy? (Hull 1985, p.96ff.). Such an attitude does not need to face the practical difficulties of access to learning - it sees it all as irrelevant.

There is a strong tradition, as I have hinted when referring to the 'rump' theory, of limited acceptance of change in rural areas. This has actually been exacerbated in recent decades by the imposing of incomer ideals of what is appropriate for many villages, in terms of opposing low-cost housing and so on (Ambrose 1992). But it is also observed by many of our respondents in the recruitment patterns of new learning ventures. I offer a personal anecdote as illustration here: when I worked as a WEA tutor-organiser in the Midlands during the later 1960s I was asked to run a local history class for a very active village branch; it was well attended and lively, but no indigenous villagers enrolled and it became a 'finding our new roots' exercise for recent settlers. If anything, this pattern seems to have grown as both commuting and first-stage retirement patterns have developed since then.

Resistance to the demands of well-heeled immigrants is one thing but not all villages have substantial numbers of them. There still seems to remain in many areas a sense of dissonance

which is a complex mixture of inherited patterns of deference with a deep suspicion of any outsiders. The Church of England, in particular, has experienced this for centuries and the secularised neo-Protestantism of much adult education slots into, and is probably hampered by, already well-established suspicions of attempted innovation (Russell 1986).

We were obviously unable in this research to establish the extent or form of these mental barriers as distinct from the more obvious physical and economic ones. Since formal adult education is still a minority pursuit in general, how far are rural attitudes to it different from urban ones? One major issue which will operate both regionally and in smaller enclaves is the extent to which drastic changes in the rural employment base have affected cultural attitudes. An important stereotype of the male agricultural workforce was articulated by the distinguished sociologist Howard Newby, in his key book, *The Deferential Worker*. He argued that the long history of a remarkably skilled but singularly low-waged group had seen little change in their actual social assumptions about a 'natural order' of hierarchy. This was by no means limited to the employees of large estates and titled families. The face-to-face work patterns to be found in the uneven partnerships between, say, a farmer and his one or two staff in much modern high-intensity 'agribusiness' have probably done little to change the situation. (Newby 1977)

In modern agriculture there may, indeed, be a higher post-school education participation rate among the workforce but it is usually in the form of vocational day-release to the local agricultural or further education college. This is seen as having value but the enhanced work skills are just as likely to be exercised in the existing social milieu as to make even small changes to it.

What was exciting about much of our investigation was the extent to which it revealed concern among providers for enhancing skills for job-change as local employment bases shift. The tele-cottages come particularly to mind as does the varied provision for women. Here one reaches an even greater difficulty with gender relations in a dissonant context. 'Deprivation' for women is now taken as a given for both urban and rural areas, especially as far as working-class families are concerned. Again, there is a long history of observation here, perhaps best summed up in Flora Thompson's description of late-Victorian Oxfordshire women as 'the besieged generation'. (Thompson 1938, Ch.VI). More recently, it surfaced in Arnold Wesker's play, *Roots*.

The individual cases we quote in the reports show very familiar responses to anyone who has worked with mature students in higher education, let alone at some of the levels described. They also reflect the tensions which are likely to continue as expected living standards in a low-wage, high-cost rural *milieu* demand secondary wage-earning by women. There are various ironies here - the 'family wage' of most rural males is rarely sufficient to purchase even simple consumer life-styles so rural women are often being forced to expand patterns of subsidiary or by-employment which were supposed quite wrongly to have died out in the later nineteenth century (Derounian 1993). It is not only the indigenous who are affected - the costs of an incomer's rural idyll can be sufficiently high as to demand more than one income per household. The issue, here, however, is the extent to which some incomers are already educationally privileged, so that their expectations of formal adult education in their chosen settlements may be linked more to recreation than to
the needs of 'local' women. Other incomers, as Sue McGrath has claimed in her report, may be just as deprived as the longterm residents.

Many of the women interviewed alluded in more general terms to the 'cognitive dissonance' of male relations - 'not for the likes of us' was also expressed as both scepticism and resentment, saying essentially that it was 'not for the likes of you' (Hull 1985, p.96ff). In this sense, providing opportunities for rural women to overcome the clearly-catalogued econo-physical barriers could be seen as taking on the mantle of therapeutic intervention, although this is contested territory. That there was frustration was apparent at all levels but especially beyond the initial stages of self and syllabus exploration. The most glaring case was in Cornwall where there was just no possibility of movement beyond the first stages of access to higher education without leaving the county altogether - there is a sharp message for the Universities of Exeter and Plymouth here. What does need to be enquired into further is the actual role of the Open University in such circumstances.

The emphasis on gender differentiation is perhaps inevitable in the contemporary educational context. But it leaves one significant question unanswered. If we take as a given that participation in much adult education, formal but more especially non-formal, is widely seen as a female activity then what about men? There seems to be a major problem that, apart from retired incomers or some local professional men, both opportunities and takeup rates by men living in the countryside are very low indeed. We come back to the thorny issues of 'need', perceived relevance in local contexts and the pervasive sense of cognitive dissonance that has dominated this section. In ex-mining areas, for instance, many men are made to feel almost totally economically and socially irrelevant as a result of the job losses and removal of community focus as a result of wholesale pit closures (*Church Times*, 2 September 1994).

These are debates and enquiries beyond the scope of this present exercise but they colour it at almost every turn because they often function as implicits in our assumptions and practices. Since the Church of England Men's Society liquidated itself a few years ago(although some local rumps carry on happily) there have been few, if any, organisations explicitly for improving the lot of rural men - note the Victorianism. The voluntary groups which hovered on the fringes of our enquiries, and which Elsdon *et al* are cataloguing assiduously, are predominantly for rural women (Elsdon 1991, 1992, 1993). There is an agenda here for research and understanding if we are not to be trapped into policies which merely shift present distortions around.

The Problematic of Deprivation

When some of the ideas and preliminary results of our surveys were floated in seminars and conferences of professional adult educators around the country there was a general response which questioned the very base of some of our hypotheses. This took the form largely of claiming that there was no effective or qualitative difference between rural and urban barriers to increased provision and participation. For many of the dissentients, all working in urban conditions, we seemed to be either missing the point, just expanding what they thought they knew already, and/or(this was not quite so openly stated) threatening their already restricted facilities by promising to demand a greater share of an inadequately-resourced cake.
It is obvious that there *is* much in common between urban and rural deprivation. Poor prior educational experiences which make the very concept of 'continuing education' almost laughable if not threatening; low wages(often around two thirds of urban equivalents) and the resulting inability to deploy marginal expenditures sufficiently to meet the total costs of part-time study; the pervasive 'culture of poverty' with centuries rather than decades of ingrained low self-esteem and restricted social horizons; all these, and many others, can be found just as

readily in Leeds, Brighton or Bristol as well as in the Yorkshire Dales, Sussex Weald and Somerset Levels. Given the recent recession and the accumulation of a decade of government policies, the current employment situation, let alone changing job opportunities, is parlous enough to act as a continued depressant. We have never doubted that but we are not prepared, after our research, to see the rural subsumed into a national picture in which it will be readily lost. A recent article in *The Countryman,* normally more given to reinforcing the 'folk' image of rurality or bemoaning modern agricultural practices, referred to 'The Hidden Secret of Rural Poverty' (Ellice 1994). It reiterated the points we have made about the continued invisibility of many rural problems, either because they are just not supposed to exist or because they are regarded as very pale shadows of the violence, ethnic tensions, poor housing, unemployment of the 'Inner City'(more often now the run-down urban fringes). As we go to press there are some welcome indications of the government's waking up to the process of neglect (*Sunday Telegraph*, 16 October 1994, p.2). To treat the rural as a pale shadow of the urban is to neglect the impact of qualitative differences. It over-simplifies understanding of the issues and prevents the working out of sufficiently flexible and innovative responses.

Geographical distance, the relatively small numbers of those concerned, the fragility of many rural sub-economies, as well as the restrictiveness of much of the local cultural inheritance, and other factors add up to make a pressing case for a more sensitive and informed response.

Incoherence and Innovation

We set out to investigate barriers with some expectations of what we might find. But we were not out to prove our prejudices because much of what we established surprised us. We realised there were far more questions we could have asked, and indications we might have followed up, had the time and finance been available. In an increasingly pan-European context there is a pressing case for international comparisons for which the data and an appropriate methodology do not exist. This has been a reflective exercise but its justification must be its usefulness in prompting both further research and in stimulating good practice.

There are many places in the field studies where we report on exciting innovations, whether teaching in a marina, tele-cottaging, or encouraging the negotiation of syllabuses of study suitable for very local needs, often much-promised but perhaps not so readily delivered. It is quite clear that, however beleaguered they may feel, many of the professionals involved in this work are brilliantly resourceful at innovation as well as maintenance as budgets continue to be eroded. But much of this is necessarily piecemeal. The strength of their work has been its responsiveness to the local; its intrinsic weakness has been its lack of coherence both regionally and nationally. It is no use sharing information and reporting results if they only produce frustration and a fury at what is essentially being wasted in the neglect of human resources and of the potential of people denied any real opportunity to realise it. Only occasionally has there been any wider recognition of these initiatives, such as when the WEA's North Yorkshire learning bus project was featured on the BBC's controversial radio programme, *Anderson Country* (Radio 4, 13 September 1994).

I have, at times in these reflections, questioned some of the inherited paternalist (or maternalist) assumptions of even the most self-proclaimedly egalitarian adult educators. That questioning *must* go on if we are to meet needs adequately. But there is more to be done. There are inherited cultural barriers to participation which decrying on the sidelines, or overt missionary proclamations, will do little to break down; they may even reinforce them. As our researchers

were told so many times, working in rural communities is a slow, long-term exercise in winning trust, in local negotiation and responsiveness demanding extreme sensitivity as well as a sharp perception of the essentials. To do that in scattered, relatively small settlements needs people who are not only well-prepared (I worry at the use of the word 'trained') but who also have the confidence that they will be adequately resourced over a sufficiently long period to be able to get somewhere.

Political rhetoric, administrative *fiat* and the expectation of short-term, readily measurable results (who wants a league table of continuing education rates listing every English village?) will not achieve that. Crossing many of the inherent barriers we have outlined is only likely to be achieved by a reversal or substantial modification of many of the policies which government at local and national levels is currently following. Those and the continued invisibility of much of the rural experience remain the largest barriers to widening participation in adult education.

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ISBN 0 904242 37 4